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SELF-REPORTS OF GRADUATES OF A TRADITIONALLY  
FEMALE PROGRAM: CAREER ASPIRATIONS, LEVEL  
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STATE UNIVERSITY OFFICE ADMINISTRATION MAJORS.

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SELF-REPORTS OF GRADUATES OF A TRADITIONALLY FEMALE  
PROGRAM: CAREER ASPIRATIONS, LEVEL OF POSITION,  
AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MICHIGAN STATE  
UNIVERSITY OFFICE ADMINISTRATION MAJORS

By

Virginia Julia Marie Sullivan, CND

A DISSERTATION

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## ABSTRACT

### SELF-REPORTS OF GRADUATES OF A TRADITIONALLY FEMALE PROGRAM: CAREER ASPIRATIONS, LEVEL OF POSITION, AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY OFFICE ADMINISTRATION MAJORS

By

Virginia Julia Marie Sullivan, CND

The problem was to examine the office administration major specifically in terms of (1) the level of position attained by women who received a degree with a secretarial specialization; (2) the career aspirations of the graduates; (3) the obstacles to obtaining a high-level secretarial, managerial, and/or executive position; and (4) the advantages or disadvantages of a secretarial background in meeting the aspirations of the graduates.

The population of the study was 220 female graduates who obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Michigan State University between 1955 and 1975 inclusive. The descriptive-survey method, utilizing a five-page questionnaire, was the means by which data were collected. A return of 80.4 percent was realized.

Seventeen percent of the graduates were single, 77.8 percent married, and 5.1 percent either widowed or divorced; no graduate over 50 years of age was represented; and over 65 percent of the graduates had children. Currently, 46.6 percent were full-time employed, 12.5 percent part-time employed, and 40.9 percent unemployed.

High-level secretarial positions as executive secretaries and administrative assistants were obtained by 44.9 percent of the graduates. A total of 15.6 percent attained the managerial level of which 8.4 percent were office managers. Over 59 percent of the graduates appeared to have high aspirations.

The majority of the graduates indicated that they liked their work, but expressed more satisfaction with the conditions surrounding the job, such as, job security and working conditions, than with the job itself and such factors as potential for advancement and challenge of the work.

The graduates rated work performance and personal qualities as the factors contributing the most to advancement; unwillingness to assume responsibility was rated as the greatest deterrent to advancement. A total of 46.8 percent indicated that they needed further education and/or training if they wished to advance.

Over 70 percent of the graduates felt that their secretarial skills contributed in some degree to advancement and that the secretarial core and the business administration core had been important factors in preparing them for employment. They recommended that the secretarial and the general education core be given the same emphasis, but that the business administration core be given greater emphasis.

While over 92 percent recommended the major for women interested in advancing into high-level secretarial positions, only 39.5 percent recommended it for advancement into a managerial position.

The following conclusions were based on the findings: (1) while the office administration major provides a distinct advantage for women in obtaining a high-level secretarial position, once graduates are established in the secretarial role, opportunities to advance into non-secretarial positions are limited; (2) relatively few of the office administration majors obtain middle-management positions; (3) a disparity exists between the stated aspirations of the graduates and their actual job attainment; (4) the majority of the office administration graduates who acquire aspirations to move into management positions do so after graduation rather than before entering university or before graduation; (5) the pervasive stereotypes associated with secretarial work appear to have a debilitating effect on the graduates demeaning the value of their degree in comparison with other degrees and causing dissatisfaction with the major; (6) the office administration major apparently does not provide the best entrance into the business world today for women who aspire to move beyond the secretarial level into management positions; (7) over half the graduates remain employed for only one to five years after graduation, but many return to full-time employment after their family responsibilities lessen; and (8) the majors who graduated after 1965 appear to give greater value to their business administration background than to their secretarial background and to express greater disillusionment with the stereotypes of the secretarial field.

To my parents

Mary E. Sullivan, with gratitude and admiration

Vincent D. Sullivan, in loving memory

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere appreciation is expressed to the members of my Doctoral Guidance Committee: To Dr. Robert P. Poland, guidance committee chairman, for his counsel, encouragement, and unfailing optimism; to Dr. Judith E. Lanier for her interest and cooperation; to Dr. Mary Virginia Moore for her helpful assistance and enthusiasm; and to Dr. Billie Rader for his able advice and cheerful accessibility.

Grateful tribute is accorded the many graduates of the office administration program who responded so well to the questionnaire upon which this study depended, with special thanks to those who generously answered it twice.

Deep gratitude is expressed to the sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame for the inspiration of their professional ideals and for their generous support; to Beverly L. Bixler for her friendship and her spirit of play; and to my family for their loyal faith and constant love.



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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

American history books of tomorrow will undoubtedly describe the sixties as a decade characterized by social unrest and turmoil out of which diverse movements grew like so many signposts of the tenor of the times. Through all the movements, black, gay, or women's, a common theme ran; namely, the demand of men and women to be given their due rights and status as human beings and as citizens. Indeed, the declaration of 1975 as International Women's Year seemed to be society's tacit validation of the women's cause. It is not too surprising that one outcome of the turbulent climate of the sixties has been a questioning and a criticism of programs that prepare women for traditional occupations.

In the United States, legal barriers to equal rights and opportunities have largely been overcome.<sup>1</sup> Yet the report of the World Conference of the International Women's Year states that, while

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<sup>1</sup>The legislation alluded to is the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972), Executive Order 11246 (as amended by Executive Order 11375), Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (as amended by the Fair Labor Standards Amendments of 1974), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. U.S., Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Women's Bureau, Women in the Economy: Full Freedom of Choice, Report of conference held 11-13 September 1975, p. 31.

discrimination because of sex is prohibited by law, barriers in the form of prejudice still exclude women from decision- and policy-making positions in virtually all aspects of life.<sup>2</sup> And the report goes on to say:

If women are to achieve equal opportunity, rights and responsibilities with men, they must have greater access to existing power structures which include, but are not limited to, executive positions in government, business, industry, labor and politics.<sup>3</sup>

Population surveys<sup>4</sup> confirm the report: In July of the same year, 47 women per 100 men, an increase from 29 women per 100 men in 1950, were employed year-round with a median income 57 percent that of men. As well, 13 percent of all families were headed by women of which 46 percent lived below the poverty level. The fact that over half of the women who work today have clerical, operative, and service positions attests to a lack of access to positions of power.

According to Hilton,<sup>5</sup> the reason lies partly in the stereotyped image of the work-life patterns of women that persists; namely, that

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<sup>2</sup>U.S., Congress, Senate, Committee on Government Operations, World Conference of the International Women's Year, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 1975, pp. 69-73.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>4</sup>U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, A Statistical Portrait of Women in the U.S., Current Population Reports, Special Studies Series p-23, No. 58 (1976), p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>As discussed by Margaret J. Hilton, "Equal Opportunities for Women in Business: Fact or Fiction?" Journal of Business Education 51 (February 1976): 230-232 who bases her comments on the results of her study, "The Employment Status of Men and Women Baccalaureate Graduates from the College of Business Administration at the University of Tennessee from 1968 to 1973" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of

women work only for extra pocket money; are absent from work more often than men; change jobs more frequently; receive equal pay for equal work; and are not interested in a career. It lies partly in the subtle sex discrimination of organizations expressed by greater concern for men's careers than women's careers and by skepticism of "women's abilities to balance work and family demands."<sup>6</sup> And it lies partly in the vocational choices women make. At the vocational-technical<sup>7</sup> level, girls are concentrated in home economics, health and office occupations. Yet in the traditionally female dominated office occupations, girls comprise only 27 percent of the students in supervisory and administrative management--enrolling in supportive rather than in management occupations. At the collegiate level, the same phenomenon occurs. Conditioned by societal views, women continue to conceive of themselves in traditional roles:

Much less heartening for women is their persistent concentration in college courses which prepare them for the traditional women's professions. Perpetuating the "occupational segregation" of women, this trend has continued despite the remarkable increase in women's college enrollment in the past decade.<sup>8</sup>

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Tennessee in Knoxville, 1974). See also U.S., Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Women's Bureau, The Myth and the Reality, rev., 1974, pp. 1-3.

<sup>6</sup>Benson Rosen and Thomas H. Jerdee, "Sex Stereotyping in the Executive Suite," Harvard Business Review 52 (March-April 1974): 58.

<sup>7</sup>U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Education and Labor, Sex Discrimination and Sex Stereotyping in Vocational Education, Hearings before the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education, 94th Cong., 1st sess., 1975, p. 294.

<sup>8</sup>U.S., Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Women's Bureau, Plans for Widening Women's Educational Opportunities, 1972, p. 2.



The disparagement of women's traditional professions implicit in the last statement presents a challenge to educational institutions which have programs that prepare women for traditional occupations. For, while it is true that employers' attitudes will continue to limit women's potential until the myths and stereotypes with respect to women's roles are broken down, other factors must be considered. The Women's Bureau<sup>9</sup> has issued statements stressing that women must have better career planning and counseling; that they must not only be cognizant of their legal rights but must press for their enforcement; and, that some may even have to change their career aspirations in order to obtain higher pay and greater opportunities for promotion. Although recent statistics<sup>10</sup> indicate an increase in the number of women who are electing business, law, engineering, and medicine, and are abandoning teaching, this trend may be due to a scarcity of openings in the teaching field rather than a change in career aspirations.

Hence, it is incumbent upon educators to scrutinize the traditionally "female" programs of their institutions in the light of the present focus on the equality of women, the tremendous increase in numbers of women in the job market, the growing opportunity for challenging employment for women through legislation, and the burgeoning aspirations of women. One form of scrutiny is precisely the research undertaken in this study.

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<sup>9</sup>U.S., Department of Labor, Employment Standards Administration, Women's Bureau, Careers for Women in the 70's, 1973, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup>Beverly T. Watkins, "This Year's Freshmen Reflect New Views of Women's Role," Chronicle of Higher Education 11 (January 1976): 1.

### Statement of the Problem

The problem was to examine the office administration major in terms of the employment experience and the career ambitions of its graduates, most of whom are women. Specifically, the study was designed: (1) to determine the level of position attained by women who received a degree with a secretarial specialization; (2) to determine the career aspirations of graduates of the program; (3) to analyze the obstacles to obtaining a high-level secretarial, managerial, and/or executive position; and (4) to assess the advantages or disadvantages of a secretarial background in meeting the aspirations of the graduates.

Generally, the role of the college-educated secretary, variously called an executive secretary, an administrative secretary, or an administrative assistant, has been to function in a support capacity to top-level management and to be recognized as a member of the management team. In addition, a secretarial background has been advocated as an "open door" leading to movement from positions of a support nature to positions of a decision-making nature--from support for management to that of management itself. At the same time, a great deal of ambivalence has surrounded collegiate secretarial programs.

Thus, whether or not graduates of the office administration program with a secretarial specialization obtain high-level secretarial or middle- or upper-management type positions was of primary interest in this study.

The following questions were subproblems derived from the principal problem:

1. Do graduates of the office administration program obtain high-level secretarial positions, middle-management positions, and/or executive positions?
2. Do women with an office administration major aspire to obtain management or executive positions? If so, when do they acquire their aspirations?
3. Are graduates of the office administration major satisfied with the career rewards received from the positions they obtain?
4. What factors appear to contribute to the advancement of women into high-level secretarial or management positions, and what factors deter their advancement?
5. How do graduates from the office administration program evaluate their secretarial specialization in terms of advancement to high-level positions?
6. How do office administration majors evaluate their educational background in terms of their career and their opportunities for advancement?

#### Secretarial/Office Administration Program

In order to establish more concretely the implications of the problem under investigation, the evolution of the secretarial or office administration major between 1955 and 1975 is described.

The first of the land-grant institutions, Michigan State University was founded in 1855 and, as Michigan Agricultural College, was dedicated primarily to scientific and practical instruction in agriculture. By 1925, however, it had diversified sufficiently to include a business administration curriculum in its new Liberal Arts Division and to be called Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science.<sup>11</sup> Then, in 1939, secretarial or "commercial" subjects, as they were then called, were introduced for the first time.<sup>12</sup>

A further development in secretarial education occurred in 1944 when a major structural reorganization of the college took place. Basic College (now University College) was introduced to provide a broad general education in the humanities and social sciences for all freshmen and sophomores. In the newly organized School of Business and Public Service, two-year terminal curricula were offered, one of which was secretarial science.<sup>13</sup>

The four-year secretarial administration major came into being in 1951 with the establishment of a Department of Business Education and Secretarial Studies. From 1951 to 1960, Michigan State University offered the two-year terminal secretarial science program and the four-year secretarial administration program. However, all terminal

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<sup>11</sup> Michigan State College Bulletin, vol. 21, 1926, pp. 19-20.

<sup>12</sup> Bulletin of Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, vol. 33, no. 4, March 1939, p. 81.

<sup>13</sup> Michigan State College Catalogue, vol. 39, no. 6, March 1945, p. 85.

programs were discontinued in 1961.<sup>14</sup> The major was called Executive Secretarial Administration until 1969, when it was renamed Office Administration.

As stated in the 1954-55 catalogue, all degree programs in the Business Administration Curriculum consisted of the following:

(1) Basic College study of general education; (2) Business Administration Core Curriculum to furnish the student with tool subjects and to acquaint him with functional areas, principles, and problems involved in operating and managing American business enterprises; and (3) professional programs developed in the departments of Accounting, General Business, and Business Education and Secretarial Studies.<sup>15</sup>

A total of 192 credits were required to graduate: 92 credits to enter the School of Business of which 45 credits comprised the Basic College sequence; 21-30 credits in the major area; and the remainder in the business core subjects and electives.<sup>16</sup> Over the years, the total degree requirement was reduced university-wide to 180 credits, with some exceptions. However, the basic pattern of course requirements remained much the same; 85 credits to enter the College of Business of which 49 credits comprised the University College sequence; 18-21 credits in the major area, and the remainder in the business core subjects and electives.<sup>17</sup> Aside from the natural updating of course

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<sup>14</sup> Michigan State University Catalogue, vol. 55, no. 12, May 1961, p. 111.

<sup>15</sup> Michigan State College Catalogue, vol. 49, no. 6, March 1954, p. 103.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 91, 95.

<sup>17</sup> Michigan State University Academic Programs, vol. 48, no. 4, June 1974, pp. 121, 127.

work that ensued and changes of emphasis in certain areas, the structure of the program remained essentially the same.

The principal objectives of the secretarial administration program remained intact also; namely, to enable the student to achieve competent secretarial skills, to obtain a general education background, and to develop an understanding of business and economic concepts and principles. The main difference reflected in the objectives during the 21-year period was the expansion of the secretarial role. In 1954, the program sought "to prepare [students] for careers in the more responsible areas of business available to the executive secretary";<sup>18</sup> in 1962, it was "designed for the student who plans a career at the executive secretarial level";<sup>19</sup> and in 1974, it was designed "for the student who plans a career at the administrative secretarial level, . . . Completion of the program assures exceptional employment opportunities in all types of institutions."<sup>20</sup> Therefore, while the study covered a 21-year span, the secretarial/office administration program did not change radically during that time in its essential composition or in its main objectives.

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<sup>18</sup> Michigan State College Catalogue, vol. 49, no. 6, March 1954, p. 94.

<sup>19</sup> Michigan State University Catalogue, vol. 56, no. 11, March 1962, p. 111.

<sup>20</sup> Michigan State University Academic Programs, vol. 48, no. 4, June 1974, p. 126.

### Significance of the Study

The collegiate secretarial major is designed for individuals who aspire to high-level secretarial and/or management type positions. A review of the literature reveals, on the one hand, that women have been advised to go the secretarial route to obtain management and even executive positions in business, industry, and the professions, while on the other hand, secretarial courses and/or majors in four-year degree granting institutions have been questioned and oftentimes severely criticized. The confusion of such ambivalence necessitates a real need to determine if a collegiate secretarial background does, in fact, enable women to obtain the positions for which it is designed and advertised.

Changing times have resulted in a diminution of status in working in an office. As Popham notes with some acerbity:

Office work has always been "women's work" and traditionally low paid. It is a service function designed for making other people's efforts more productive. With the flowering of the women's movement women's libbers are taking pot shots regularly at the whole idea of working in the clerical occupations.<sup>21</sup>

In an era of raised consciousness of women's struggle for equal opportunity in employment, one finds a considerable skepticism of once accepted assumptions.

Almost universally, women who aspired to executive positions have been advised that the best way to get started is through the secretarial route. But how

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<sup>21</sup> Estelle L. Popham, "It's Time to Answer Back," Journal of Business Education 52 (October 1976): 4.

often is their goal achieved using this route? And how many men are advised to take the same approach?<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, while the management orientation of college secretarial preparation has become more and more pronounced, is there justification for assertions, such as, "The 1981 secretary will be a college graduate and will be unquestionably a member of the management team"?<sup>23</sup>

Some would say no:

In spite of the fact that secretaries are frequently the most knowledgeable about the details of operation in an organization, it is not unusual for institutions to hire, as administrative assistants, recent male graduates from business administration programs at twice the salary of the secretary who will be training him for his job.<sup>24</sup>

While the educational experiences provided by the secretarial major may have been adequate in the past, the passage of civil rights, equal opportunity, and equal pay legislation and the growth of the women's liberation movement may have brought about openings in upper-level positions for which additional or different educational experiences are required. There is an urgent need for data in order to direct women to the programs which will enable them to fulfill their aspirations.

At the same time, it cannot be assumed, nor should it be, that everyone who obtains a degree with a secretarial emphasis has

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<sup>22</sup>Gary N. McLean, "Removing Sex Bias from Post-Secondary Business Programs," Journal of Business Education 51 (November 1975): 66.

<sup>23</sup>M. Merle Law, "What's Ahead for the Secretary," Personnel Journal 45 (June 1966): 372.

<sup>24</sup>McLean, p. 67.



the ambition to be promoted to a management position. In a survey of 571 certified professional secretaries (CPS) and 498 supervisors, Pledger<sup>25</sup> found that most secretaries did not desire to assume decision-making responsibilities but were contented to be assistants to their employers with some administrative duties. However, most of these secretaries had no more than one year of postsecondary education and were interested primarily in increasing the family income. Therefore, the level of their attainment may be related to their ambition, education, and career interest.

It would appear that collegiate secretarial courses and programs are at a crossroads today. According to Pearce:

Almost without exception, colleges and universities are either losing these programs or experiencing shrinking enrollments. Concurrently, specialization of training demanded by an increasingly technological society has brought pressure to increase the number and type of secretarial program offerings. As a result, colleges and universities are suffering an undermining of their base of operation. Thus, viable programs in office management and teacher education, both dependent on sound secretarial training, are jeopardized.<sup>26</sup>

Not all educators believe that office management programs are enhanced by secretarial courses. In a review of 152 college and university programs, Hershey<sup>27</sup> found that 58 offered a four-year major

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<sup>25</sup> Rosemary Pledger, "Tomorrow's Secretary--A Member of the Management Team?" Journal of Business Education 45 (April 1970): 295-297.

<sup>26</sup> C. Glenn Pearce, "Update: Business Education College and University Programs," Journal of Business Education 51 (January 1976): 154.

<sup>27</sup> Gerald L. Hershey, "Office Management: Opportunities and Challenges for Business Teacher Educators," NABTE Review 3 (1975): 93-101.

in the area of office management; 41 of those titled the major "Office Administration." He criticized the "dichotomous thrusts" he found in his analysis of course offerings: some of the courses appeared to be directed toward preparation of managers of administration and support services while others seemed to be designed for nonmanagement office employees and secretaries. Hershey speculated:

As a result, students may be well prepared for secretarial positions, but such positions frequently lack the career opportunities and rewards commonly available to other four-year business graduates. Thus, the multiple aspects related to career choice and career rewards should be carefully investigated by collegiate business teacher and "office management" educators.<sup>28</sup>

A fair amount of research has been conducted on the opportunities for employment in high-level secretarial and managerial positions for women. Generally, these studies have not surveyed women who had a specific college background; rather they have surveyed women who were employed already in high-level positions in order to determine the educational, attitudinal, and personal requirements for the positions. Little significant research has been made to determine if women who possess the recommended qualities obtain the kinds of positions for which they were prepared. Smith<sup>29</sup> located 30 research articles completed between 1960 and 1975 that alluded specifically to the office administration, office management, or administrative management area. Only one study, reviewed in Chapter II, pertained solely to

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>29</sup> Harold T. Smith, "Research in Administrative Office Management," Delta Pi Epsilon Journal 19 (January 1977): 2.

women and very few of the women in the sample had an office administration major or even had graduated with a degree. Of the several dissertations completed since 1975 that concerned office administration or related positions, only one surveyed graduates with an office administration major. The necessity for research in order to accumulate the data required to determine future policies and future direction substantiates the need for this study. Otherwise, traditional programs that have served women so well in the past may be downgraded to the point of oblivion simply from a lack of information from which to discern the changes required to meet the needs of the times.

#### Delimitations

This investigation was delimited in scope and nature in the following ways.

Only office administration majors who obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Michigan State University, and who graduated from 1955 through 1975 were included in this study.

Since only two men had graduated from the program between 1955 and 1975, men were not included in the study.

No attempt was made to determine the duties and the responsibilities of the graduates, nor to determine how proficient they were in their respective positions.

Although the study evaluated all components of the program--business administration and general education as well as secretarial--it did not measure the efficacy of particular courses in any way.

### Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the office administration major in terms of the factors that influence the employment status and the work life of the graduates of the program.

A secondary purpose evolving from the investigation was to provide educators and administrators with information for future direction of the office administration program, and to provide counselors with pertinent data upon which to base career advice.

### Limitations

A limitation of this study was its lack of generalizability since the population was drawn exclusively from Michigan State University graduates. While it is assumed that graduates with an office administration major from this university have career patterns and career aspirations similar to office administration majors in comparable institutions, the conclusions drawn from the study may not apply to other localities.

The nature of the instrument imposed another limitation upon the study. A questionnaire is the usual means of collecting data from a relatively large sample, but it has the disadvantages of being less accurate than the personal interview and of not being answered.

A further limitation was the ability of graduates to recall accurately aspirations and experiences that occurred, in some cases, many years ago.

### Definition of Terms

Office Administration Major--a four-year university curriculum leading to a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration with general education, business administration and secretarial components.

Secretarial Specialization--concentration of approximately 18 to 21 credits in courses, such as, typewriting, shorthand and transcription, secretarial administration and office management.

Office Occupations--in the strictest sense, those occupations utilizing secretarial and clerical skills to maintain the office; in a broader sense, any occupation filled by personnel in the office who contribute to the overall functioning of that office. The latter meaning was used most often in this study.

Administrative Assistant--generally, a nonmanagement employee who aids the executive in a staff capacity by coordinating office services, such as, personnel, budget preparation and control, housekeeping, records control, and special management duties; issues and interprets operating policies; and reviews and answers correspondence.<sup>30</sup>

Administrative/Executive Secretary--a nonmanagement employee who executes administrative policies determined by or in conjunction with other officials; prepares memoranda outlining and explaining administrative procedures and policies to supervisory workers; and depending on the organization, works in a line or staff capacity. Performs secretarial duties for top-level executives or managers.

Secretary--a clerical employee in occupations concerned with carrying out minor administrative and general office duties in addition to taking and transcribing dictation; scheduling appointments, composing routine correspondence, filing correspondence, greeting visitors; and relieving officials of clerical work and minor business detail.

Management--the planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, controlling, problem-solving and decision-making function of an organization.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Secretarial definitions were derived from U.S., Department of Labor, Manpower Administration, Dictionary of Occupational Titles, vol. 1, Definition of Titles (1965).

<sup>31</sup> Management definitions were derived from a reading of several sources: William M. Berliner and William J. McLarney, Management Practice and Training: Cases and Principles (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1974); Dalton E. McFarland, Management: Principles and Practices (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1974); and

Top-management--executives responsible for the major functions of production, sales, finance, accounting, personnel and company-wide policy-making decisions.

Middle-management--Department Heads or Division Managers responsible for executing administrative decisions; and performing day-to-day management of an organization.

Supervisory Management--office managers or supervisors responsible for directing and coordinating office staff or nonmanagerial employees in the attainment of operational goals.

Career Aspirations--goals or ambitions directed toward a particular level of the occupational hierarchy.<sup>32</sup>

Career Rewards--compensation from one's job or position, such as, salary, promotion, status, or recognition, associated with feelings of satisfaction.<sup>33</sup>

### Organization of the Study

The problem and subproblems, the significance of the study, the purpose, delimitations, limitations, and definition of terms are introduced in Chapter I. A review of literature is summarized in Chapter II. The development of the instrument, determination and collection of the data, and analysis techniques are presented in Chapter III. The results of the study are analyzed in Chapter IV. And the summary, conclusions, and recommendations are presented in Chapter V.

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Wayne L. McNaughton, J. McClelland Hartley, and Frederick L. Schwartz, Introduction to Business Enterprise (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1970).

<sup>32</sup> Dictionary of Education, 3d ed. (1973), s.v. "Occupational Aspiration."

<sup>33</sup> Dictionary of Psychology, rev. ed. (1975), s.v. "Aspirations" and "Reward."

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The secretarial profession was a "recognized and esteemed"<sup>1</sup> position for almost 4,000 years before women were first permitted in 1861 to enter government and business offices in the United States. By 1920, the secretarial field was dominated by women, who had evolved from amanuenses, "typewriters," and stenographers to the coveted position of secretary. Since then, reams have been written about the secretary. As well, a perusal of the Index to Doctoral Dissertations in Business Education<sup>2</sup> indicates that between 1900 and 1975 a large number of studies have focused on the secretary, investigating her duties and responsibilities, her training and education, as well as her characteristics and aptitudes, in an attempt to establish a typical profile.

In this chapter, the literature is reviewed from both a historical and a research point of view. The historical background situates the main thrust of the investigation; the studies reviewed establish a research base.

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth S. Oelrich, "The Position of the Female Secretary in the United States from 1900 through 1967: An Historical Study" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Dakota, 1968), pp. 12, 26.

<sup>2</sup>Harves Rahe, ed., Index to Doctoral Dissertations in Business Education, 1900-1975 (St. Peter, Minn.: Delta Pi Epsilon, 1975).

### Historical Perspective

According to Oelrich, "Since women first held secretarial positions in the late 1890s and early 1900s, the position has been one of responsibility involving authority for decision making and close professional relationship between the employer and the secretary."<sup>3</sup> From 1900 to 1930, the secretarial position was one of prestige and status. Then, when the increased demand for secretaries and the low birth rate of the 1930s resulted in a shortage of office workers over the next 25 years, employers tried to alleviate the shortage by lowering employment standards and by offering enticements to high school graduates. While previous to 1940, prospective secretaries most often had postsecondary education and training, increasingly after 1940, the high schools offered "secretarial" courses which were primarily stenographic in nature. By the end of World War II, the secretarial position was no longer a prestigious one.<sup>4</sup> Before 1920, the secretarial position was not a job-entry position, but was rather the ultimate goal of stenographers. In contrast to the stenographic position, the "secretarial position was characterized by variety, demanded broad knowledge, and placed greater emphasis on personal traits."<sup>5</sup> A college education supplemented by stenography, typewriting, and bookkeeping was considered to be appropriate training for the secretary or "private" secretary as she came to be called.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 283.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 284, 286, 290.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 79.



At least two problems have plagued business educators and administrators alike for a long time: the ambiguous nature of the title "secretary" itself; and the struggle to obtain academic respectability for secretarial programs.

Until the 1920s, the secretarial position was rather clearly defined. Gradually, between the two wars, it became an all-inclusive term, so much so that by the 1960s the description of an ordinary secretarial position resembled that of the stenographic position of the 1900s.<sup>7</sup> As Moore<sup>8</sup> pointed out fifteen years ago, and the observation is no less valid today, the title "secretary" is used to describe everyone on a continuum from the person who has limited training and performs menial office tasks with little or no responsibility to the person with university training who performs vital support functions involving great responsibility. This fact has had far-reaching effects on institutions of higher learning and on the general public, as well as on the person who possesses the title.

Secretarial and office administration departments have long had to struggle for their place in institutions of learning. Historically, this was true for all vocationally and professionally oriented programs. The sketchiest perusal of the history of American higher education reveals the deep-seated struggle that ensued between advocates of liberal education and those of vocational education. The fact that

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 284.

<sup>8</sup>Mary V. Moore, "Collegiate Preparation of the Professional Secretary," American Business Education 18 (March 1962): 162-164.

many tended to identify the humanities with liberal education, to make vocational education synonymous with job training, and to give professional education a position of status, power, and prestige, only added to the confusion of the philosophical debates that ranged from the late 1700s to our own day. Rudolph<sup>9</sup> notes that while industrial expansion after the Civil War made science the instrument of reform, the institution that legitimized technical and vocational education was the land grant college created by the Morrill Act of 1862.

While it is generally recognized today that a true education must be both liberal and vocational if the whole person is to be educated, the integration of the two has remained a thorny issue.

Dressel states:

In many cases the solution to the problem of combining the liberal and the vocational has been resolved by extending the concept of major to include these fields. Thus, majors in business administration, secretarial studies, . . . are now accepted as the equivalent of majors in more traditional departments.<sup>10</sup>

The first four-year degree in secretarial science was offered in 1912 by the Margaret Morrison Carnegie College. Until the decline in status of the secretarial position after the 1930s, the typical course of study was liberal arts studies, business administration courses, and shorthand and typewriting. By 1943, 37 colleges and

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<sup>9</sup>Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), pp. 201-263.

<sup>10</sup>Paul L. Dressel, The Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education (Washington, D.C.: The Center for Applied Research in Education, Inc., 1963), p. 14.

universities accredited by the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business offered secretarial science curricula. However, during the late 40s and 50s many secretarial programs were dropped from colleges and universities.<sup>11</sup>

In an attempt to professionalize secretarial work, during the 50s, increased emphasis was again placed on the need for the importance of a broad general education and knowledge of all aspects of business administration. It was ironic that, in spite of the pressing need and demand for secretaries with education beyond the high school level, many colleges and universities discontinued their secretarial science programs.<sup>12</sup>

The tenor of the times may be discerned by the remarks of Hamilton in the fifties:

It is believed that there is less incentive for women to obtain degrees in business than for men. Management will not consider women for certain positions regardless of their educational qualifications. Most women preparing for careers in business enter through secretarial, clerical and sales occupations. And in these the educational requirements are not high or rigid.<sup>13</sup>

Twenty years later one can take issue on all of Hamilton's statement, the last comment in particular. Since the searching analyses of the Gordon and Howell and the Pierson<sup>14</sup> reports of 1959 criticizing

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<sup>11</sup> Oelrich, pp. 89, 237.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 286.

<sup>13</sup> Herbert A. Hamilton, "The Present Status of Higher Education for Business," Education for Business Beyond High School in Sixteenth American Business Education Yearbook (Teaneck, N.J.: Somerset Press, 1957), p. 38.

<sup>14</sup> Robert A. Gordon and James E. Howell, Higher Education for Business (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959); and Frank C. Pierson, The Education of American Businessmen: A Study of University-College Programs in Business Administration (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1959).

collegiate schools of business for having low standards, for admitting below college level students, and for offering vocationally oriented specializations, business education has evolved to provide a definite emphasis on the liberal arts and a change in the nature of the courses that make up the business areas.<sup>15</sup> Secretarial programs came under particular fire, for they were among those recommended for elimination because of their orientation for specific job preparation which it was felt mitigated against the major objective of business schools to prepare professional leaders and specialists to serve management.<sup>16</sup>

A study by Lowe,<sup>17</sup> motivated by the trend to phase out secretarial curricula, sought to determine the attitudes of deans of programs of business administration toward secretarial and business education curricula. From her findings, she concluded that secretarial programs would continue to be offered in four-year colleges and universities with schools of business containing the programs in the majority of cases and working cooperatively with schools of education in preparing business teachers. However, because of the influence of

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<sup>15</sup> Milton C. Olson, "Collegiate Schools of Business," Business Education Meets the Challenges of Change, in Fourth National Business Education Yearbook (Washington, D.C.: National Business Education Association, 1966), pp. 164-174.

<sup>16</sup> Leonard J. West, "Business Education," in Encyclopedia of Educational Research, ed. Robert L. Evel (New York: Macmillan Co., 1969), pp. 105-106.

<sup>17</sup> Helen Lowe, "A Study of the Prospects for Secretarial and Business Education Curricula in Four-Year Colleges," Delta Pi Epsilon Journal 8 (August 1966): 28-32.

accrediting associations, particularly the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business, and the Gordon and Howell and the Pierson reports, college and university secretarial programs would become more management oriented.

The recognition that competent executive leadership demanded, beyond technical expertise, qualities such as the ability to communicate, to solve problems, and to regulate human relations led also to the recognition that the same qualities must be present to a great extent in those most closely associated with the executive in a support capacity.<sup>18</sup> Therefore, educators strove to design programs that would prepare secretaries to fill top-management support roles.

The objective of the college-level program defined by Eyster over a decade ago has not changed and clearly illustrates this management orientation:

The general objective of collegiate secretarial and office education is the preparation of a student for high-level administrative service in business and professional assignments by building upon a broad foundation of general education the complex of business and economic knowledges, understandings, and skills requisite for such professional assignment. Such business and professional assignments require qualifications that can be met only by a college graduate. Collegiate secretarial and office administration education is one of the primary routes for the entrance of women in business and professional service.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Irol W. Balsley, "Collegiate Secretarial . . . The Awakening," Business Education Forum 22 (May 1968): 9.

<sup>19</sup> Elvin S. Eyster, "The Case for Secretarial Education in College," Journal of Business Education 39 (November 1960): 48.

The 1960s witnessed an upsurge of secretarial training at the postsecondary level: over 200 colleges and universities gave degrees in secretarial studies; most junior colleges offered secretarial programs; and most "secretarial administration programs in colleges of business administration required the same core courses in business and liberal arts that were required in other business fields."<sup>20</sup>

Today, as noted by Pearce in Chapter I, enrollments are down and programs are being eliminated once again. The reasons are not difficult to ascertain.

At least three significant factors still characterize the status of women today; namely, the sex-role stereotyping which places women in a subordinate role to men; employment patterns which vary greatly from men; and an "achievement imagery" which results in lower expectations for women than for men.<sup>21</sup> Hence, despite the progress that has been made in breaking down stereotyped beliefs, strong forces still exist which reinforce these beliefs. And despite the tremendous increase in college enrollment of women and numerous laws against discrimination on the basis of sex, relatively few women occupy top-level positions.

This general profile of the working woman takes on a deeper dimension of stereotyping when one considers the secretary. The

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<sup>20</sup>Oelrich, p. 237.

<sup>21</sup>Kay Helbing and Barry L. Reece, "Meeting Female Career Development Needs," Journal of Business Education 51 (December 1975): 120.

following excerpt represents fairly well both the general public's view of the secretary and the reality of her position:

In one sense only, women do have a small advantage over men. They can get into a corporation more easily than a man, since they come in as secretaries as a rule, whereas men usually are hired for a specific job, and are therefore subject to a much more demanding and stringent hiring process. But because women do begin, so to speak, in the ranks, they remain at least one step behind the men who began on a more exalted plane. There is a sense that men were picked out, chosen because they were likely to succeed, whereas women have somehow emerged from an altogether less prestigious apprenticeship.<sup>22</sup>

And the author goes on to say:

It is a professional conceit to suppose that the practical aims of women's liberation are generally accepted, in an age which still condemns women to the typing test and shorthand classes as the reward for a four-year liberal arts education. On the whole, a woman's possibilities still remain very limited as compared to a man's.<sup>23</sup>  
(Italics mine)

From these comments, it would seem that the position of secretary not only embodies everything that is most disturbing about women's stereotyped role, but also typically represents the best example of her stereotyped role. Hence, it cannot be surprising that young women are reluctant to associate themselves with the secretarial role when considering a college education. In general, educators have not grappled with the implications of the changing role of women. As Moskovic asserts:

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<sup>22</sup>Michael Korda, Male Chauvinism! How It Works (New York: Random House, 1972), p. 71.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

The feminist movement has already made an impact on how women perceive themselves even when they are not active participants in the movement. Because this movement may alter the career patterns of all people, it demands the close scrutiny of all educators. Regrettably, the feminist movement has received little positive attention by the majority of business educators. In fact, our underestimation and lack of communication with the movement may cause considerable damage to our past, present, and future educational contribution.<sup>24</sup>

### Research Perspective

While the employment status of the secretary has been the subject of research, resulting in various recommendations concerning the qualifications needed to obtain high-level secretarial and/or managerial positions, no studies have been made to determine explicitly if women who possess the recommended qualities obtain high-level secretarial and managerial positions. Three categories of studies, however, are related to this question: studies examining high-level secretarial positions; studies of women already employed in management and executive positions; and follow-up studies of collegiate secretarial programs.

#### Studies of High-Level Secretarial Positions

A number of early research efforts sought to identify the role of the secretary through an analysis of her duties and traits.<sup>25</sup> At least five studies, however, have dealt specifically with high-level

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<sup>24</sup>L. Michael Moskovis, "Education for the Office of the Future," Business Education Forum 31 (November 1976): 4.

<sup>25</sup>Virginia E. Casebier, "Profile of a Typical Secretary," Business Education World 39 (October 1958): 27.



secretarial positions. Noyes<sup>26</sup> (1960) sought to clarify the differences between the duties of the executive secretary and the non-executive secretary, and to clarify the executive secretarial role in its relationship to management. The need for her study arose from the "variations in nomenclature and description of secretarial jobs"<sup>27</sup> which resulted in the title "secretary" having little meaning. From her analysis of data obtained from 223 questionnaires and from 25 interviews, she found that the typical executive secretary was 42 years of age, earning \$5,750 a year, single, and college educated. The main difference between the activities of executive and non-executive secretaries was one of degree rather than kind. There were five activities, however, which were part of the executive secretary's responsibilities more often than the non-executive secretary: handling personal banking, handling confidential papers, arranging banquets and the like, supervising a personal stenographer, and assisting the superior's family. The executive secretary qualified as a member of management because of the managerial functions she performed, the status of the office environment in which she worked, and her close association with top management. Noyes recommended that collegiate programs include a management and human relations emphasis in their secretarial curricula.

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<sup>26</sup>Honora M. Noyes, "The Role of the Executive Secretary as a Member of Management" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1960).

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

A follow-up study by Beck<sup>28</sup> in 1963 has relevance for the present study because she investigated factors influential in determining the employment status of married women college graduates working in business offices. The factors selected were grouped under personal and socioeconomic data, the job description, policies, practices and opinions of the employing firm, and statements made by women. Beck interviewed 62 women, 31 with a business background and 31 with a nonbusiness background, as well as 37 company representatives. On analysis of the data, she determined which level within the organization the women worked: Level 1, upper-management; Level 2, middle-management; Level 3, front-line supervision; and Level 4, clerical. Since none were found to occupy upper-management positions, Level 1 was dropped. In Level 2, she grouped managers, analysts, advisors, and executive secretaries. Level 3 included women working in a supervisory capacity and Level 4 were routine clerical workers. Of interest to this study was her findings regarding Level 2. She found that half the women holding high-level positions had neither majored nor minored in business. In fact, more women in the lower-level positions had graduated with business majors or minors than those at the higher levels. However, those without a business background had to acquire supplementary training later on. Eighty-seven percent of the positions at Level 2 required a college degree while Level 3 required 44 percent. It appeared that continuance in paid

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<sup>28</sup> Esther L. Beck, "An Analysis of Selected Factors Relevant to the Employment Status in Business Offices of Married Women College Graduates" (Ed.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1963).

employment and length of employment in a company were important influences in advancement. The position of secretary was the most frequently misnamed and the job level had to be determined by the scope of the duties and responsibilities demanded by the position rather than by the title. Secretarial skills were considered to be the best means by which to gain promotion. Companies chose to recognize ability of women, however, by salary increments rather than by raising their ranks. Often, women at Level 2 felt that they would actually be ranked as executives if due credit were given to them. Women at Level 3 felt that there was a lack of opportunity for them to use their training and experience and they felt a need to hide their talents in the presence of superiors with less training. Beck concluded that the prestige positions for women would continue to be those of executive secretary and personnel director.

Paddock's<sup>29</sup> study in 1967 proposed to establish a more accurate definition of the high-level secretarial position while providing a basis for the improved development of personnel for the positions. From interviews with secretaries and personnel employees from the Indianapolis area, she obtained information on the responsibilities of the secretary pertaining to communications, to managing the office, and to personal assignments; on the qualifications needed for high-level secretarial positions; and on the developmental programs available to those aspiring for high-level positions. She found that while there

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<sup>29</sup> Harriet L. Paddock, "The Nature of the Need for the Development of Personnel for High-Level Secretarial Positions" (Ed.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1967).

were administrative aspects to the secretarial position, not all secretaries nor executives believed that administrative assignments were part of the high-level secretarial position. She concluded that a great deal of upgrading was needed through further education, training, and experience in order for a secretary to qualify for a high-level position. Paddock recommended that the minimum educational requirement be a baccalaureate degree, preferably in business administration, with a major in secretarial studies. And she concluded that those aspiring for high-level positions must pursue a career from the beginning of their formal training acquiring work experience while still in school.

Rowe<sup>30</sup> (1973) also wished to provide a base for curriculum development, but for the position of administrative assistant as held by women. She found that the activities of the administrative assistant reflected, paralleled, and complemented that of her superior, a primary requisite being knowledge of the executive's specialty. She emphasized that women should receive the same educational preparation as men; namely, a bachelor's degree, preferably in a business-administration management curriculum rather than in the clerical-secretarial curriculum. Office experience of one to nine years, as well as skills in handling a typewriter, letter composition, telephone technique, and report writing enhanced promotion opportunities. Experience, human relations expertise, dedication to the position, and specific

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<sup>30</sup> Margaret F. Rowe, "The Position of Administrative Assistant as Held by Women" (Ed.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1973).

personality traits were considered as important or more important than formal education by 67.7 percent of the administrators. Specialization in any area could be acquired through further formal education or through supplementary training.

The final study reviewed in this section differs from the others in that it does not investigate secretaries already occupying high-level positions, but rather analyzes the aspirations of senior office administration majors. Goodrich's<sup>31</sup> study in 1975 proposed to determine if the career expectations of 239 senior students from nine universities corresponded with career opportunities as seen by selected business administrators. The results of her study seemed to indicate that the career expectations of the majors were not the same as their career opportunities. The majors believed their education prepared them for administrative positions, whereas the business administrators considered the major to be preparation for a secretarial position; and the students thought they should not begin at entry-level positions whereas the business administrators stated that they would begin at entry-level positions regardless of the degree. The business administrators felt, however, that office administration graduates would obtain higher level positions faster today than they had in the past, and that their secretarial training would serve as stepping stones to higher level positions. Goodrich recommended that the majors have more

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<sup>31</sup>Elizabeth A. Goodrich, "Career Expectations of and Career Opportunities for Office Administration Majors" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1975).

practical work experience before graduation and that they research the kinds of organization and areas of specialization in which they would be happy working before graduation.

In the main, the studies in this group illustrate the validity of the concept of an hierarchy in the secretarial support function in two important ways: they delineate the function and the role of the high-level secretary in her relation to management, and they emphasize the necessity of not only an appropriate education and work experience to prepare for the role, but also a more broadly conceived and in-depth education and experience than had hitherto been the case.

These studies differ from the present effort in several respects; first, while the status of the subjects in this study is of interest, no particular position in the secretarial or managerial spectrum is focused upon; second, the activities, the duties, and the personality traits of the subjects are not investigated except in a tangential way to establish status; and, all subjects in the present study have received, at least, a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration degree, whereas most of the subjects in the studies reviewed had a variety of educational backgrounds.

#### Studies of Women in Management and Executive Positions

A number of studies have analyzed the education and training of women already in management or executive positions in order to gain insight into the factors leading to their success.

One of the early studies of women executives was conducted by Hyde<sup>32</sup> in 1952. From a questionnaire sent to names obtained from Poor's Register of Directors and Executives, Moody's Manual of Investments and various professional women's associations, as well as from friends, she received 150 usable returns. The office held by the largest number (24 out of 150) was that of assistant secretary. More than half of the women had been married, 37 percent were between 40 and 49 years of age, and the median salary was \$7,423. Twenty-four percent had a college education, although few had majored in business while at college. Many received supplementary education at night school, in on-the-job training programs, or at business colleges. Over one-third of the women started as stenographers or secretaries, perhaps explaining why so many found typewriting and shorthand to be an asset and why so many were corporate secretaries. The factors which appeared to enhance advancement were: ability to do the job; hard work; ability to get along with others; appearance; and interest in the job. Those which retarded advancement were: women's status in the business world; lack of interest in business or desire for further training; and personal traits and attitudes. On the whole, Hyde found that business preparation had been acquired

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<sup>32</sup> Frances C. Hyde, "A Study of the Training and Experience of 150 Business Women Now Occupying Managerial Positions in Business" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Iowa, 1952). Hyde cites two earlier studies: Anne H. Morrison, Women and Their Careers (New York: National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Inc., 1934); and U.S., Department of Labor, Women's Bureau, Women in Higher-Level Positions (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1950).

for the most part in business schools with the high school and college coming second and third as places of preparation.

Another study in the fifties by Rusher<sup>33</sup> analyzed 266 responses to a questionnaire sent to women who were members of the National Office Management Association (now Administrative Management Association). In order to obtain data for the improvement of educational programs, Rusher scrutinized the characteristics, the duties, the problems, the opportunities, and the educational background of these women. She found that the NOMA members had a median age of 45, a salary of \$6,500, and half were married. Most of them had been secretaries or bookkeepers and had a median of 4.6 years in school beyond the eighth grade. She also found that while there were opportunities for women in office management, few women were promoted to top-level positions because management lacked confidence in the ability of women and were reluctant to delegate responsibility and authority to them. Educational background and continued study, hard work and ambitions, interest in people, and ability to get along with them, acceptance of responsibility, experience with the company, interest in work, and knowledge of the business all contributed to advancement. Lower salaries than men constituted a major problem for the women. The major functions performed by women in office management were supervising office employees and planning and scheduling office work. To be successful in higher level positions, Rusher concluded that women must possess leadership

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<sup>33</sup>Elfreda M. Rusher, "A Study of Women in Office Management Positions, with Implications for Business Education" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1957).



qualities, and have an educational background comprised of business administration and general education courses, and supplemented by secretarial skills.

Three studies followed in the sixties. To investigate the movement of women into executive and managerial positions and to discern possible implications for curriculum change, Holley<sup>34</sup> (1960) interviewed 212 women executives and 40 top-management personnel. The median age of the women was 47.7 years and their median salary was \$5,777.27. This amount represents quite a difference from the \$6,500 stated by Rusher. However, the median salary for the 45-54 age group of Holley's study was \$6,275.26 and of college graduates \$6,000.50. Only 29.3 percent of the women interviewed had obtained a college degree although the majority had received education and training beyond high school. About half the women were married. Seventy-eight percent indicated that knowledge of secretarial skill enhanced their promotion opportunities. This is not surprising since almost 90 percent had been employed in secretarial positions. On the whole, the women felt that courses in business administration, psychology, secretarial skills, and management had been most beneficial to them. Approximately 15 percent thought that courses in management particularly would have been helpful had they had the opportunity to take them. The women had worked for 14 years on the average with 34 percent working for more than 20 years in the same company. Work performance, education and

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<sup>34</sup>Leta F. Holley, "Women in Executive and Managerial Positions in Omaha, Nebraska" (Ed.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1960).

specialized training, ability to get along with others, willingness to assume responsibility, and experience were listed most often as factors contributing to advancement. Management personnel listed qualifications, administrative ability, experiential background, personality, and willingness to take responsibility. Differences of opinion were also observed between the women and the management personnel regarding deterrents to advancement with the women indicating deficient education or lack of technical training and a lack of continuity in employment, and the managers indicating the nature of the business and the attitude of management. For the most part, Holley discerned a substantial increase in the number of women moving into executive and management positions within the decade. She recommended that courses be distributed so that academic courses comprise a minimum of 50 semester hours; professional courses, 40 hours; specialization, 12 hours; and the remainder electives. She emphasized the necessity of counselors being informed about current trends in the employment of women in business so that they could be encouraged to obtain a degree with a business administration background.

Dawkins'<sup>35</sup> study in 1962 offered some contrasts to Holley's findings. She, too, analyzed factors that influenced 251 outstanding women executives in the United States, as well as their preparation, to serve as a guide for women aspiring to managerial and executive positions. Chosen from occupational fields in education, business,

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<sup>35</sup>Lola B. Dawkins, "Women Executives in Business, Industry, and the Professions" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1962).

government and the professions, about half the women were married and 87 percent were over 40 years of age. In contrast to Holley's sample, over half the women held college degrees with 11.8 percent holding doctor's degrees although mostly of those in the field of education. Seventy-one of the women earned over \$10,000 which appeared to be related to their longer length of service. Over 70 percent had worked in their present organization for 10 years or more. Dawkins found that her study did not generally support the view that secretarial work provided a wedge for entrance into business. While over one-third replied that they had worked their way up through secretarial channels, one-half had not. (However, 57 percent did not respond to the question.) It appeared that first jobs as secretaries might be advantageous in finance, real estate, and related fields. Relatively few differences were found regarding policies concerning equal pay, qualification, promotional methods, and benefits between men and women; however, two-thirds of the women believed that they did not receive equal consideration with men in job promotions. On the other hand, less than 15 percent believed that they had been denied a position because of their sex. Many reasons were given for success. The first five in order of frequency substantially agreed with previous studies: work performance, interest and attitude toward work, experience, ability to get along with people, and education or specialized training. Dawkins concluded that women must be aware that essentially the same qualifications were required of them as for men seeking executive positions; that they must seek employment in firms accepting of women;

that they must emphasize business administration, basic English and communications, psychology and human relations; and that they must start at a younger age to climb toward executive levels.

In 1969, Bryce<sup>36</sup> compared the position, the personality traits, educational background, and promotional factors of women in four areas of business; namely, banking, manufacturing, radio TV, and retailing. She found that over half the women began their careers in stenographic or secretarial positions. Median salaries in the four areas were: banking, \$7,118; manufacturing, \$8,772; radio TV, \$5,479; and retailing, \$6,928. Median age was: banking, 46.2 years; manufacturing, 52.5; radio TV, 35.3; and retailing 43.1. Over half had some college education or a college degree with most of the women majoring in business administration or business education. Using Ghiselli's Self-Description Inventory, analysis of variance revealed significant differences among the four groups of women on traits of intelligence, maturity, supervisory ability, and need for security. Of thirteen personality traits measured, ambition, or willingness to work hard, received the highest frequency with skill, talent, or ability being rated second in importance. Discrimination against women in high places received the highest rating among obstacles to overcome. Some of the factors that encouraged advancement were interest in and enjoyment of the work, desire for more money or security and challenge. Factors that discouraged advancement were family responsibility,

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<sup>36</sup> Rose A. Bryce, "Characteristics of Women Holding Executive, Managerial and Other High-Level Positions in Four Areas of Business" (Ed.D. dissertation, Colorado State College, 1969).

lack of interest and being at the top already. Bryce concluded that women aspiring to high-level positions in business must have above-average intelligence and possess self-assurance, decisiveness, and the ability to supervise others; they must have a strong will to succeed and be willing to work hard; they should seek employment in firms that promote women to high-level positions; and they should have very good secretarial skills, a business background and general education.

In the five studies of women occupying managerial or executive positions which spanned seventeen years, several common features may be discerned: the recognition that a college degree with some business administration represented minimum educational background; the growing evidence to indicate that women must be career oriented, interested in their job, and willing to take responsibilities if they wished to obtain executive positions; and the gradual increase and acceptance of women in executive positions of every kind. Present, too, is a certain questioning of the secretarial background as the best route toward advancement in a business career.

These studies relate directly to the present study because their recommendations and their findings reflect the historical development of the secretarial major in schools of business, and constitute the basis upon which changes were made. The present study resembles these studies in that it also investigates the factors encouraging and discouraging advancement and has as an ultimate aim improvement of women's educational experience. It differs, however, in its main purpose; namely,

to examine the office administration major in light of the career aspirations and employment experience of its graduates. It also differs in its sample, in that all the women have had the same undergraduate education recommended by most of the studies.

#### Follow-Up Studies of Collegiate Secretarial Programs

Numerous follow-up studies have been made of secretarial graduates from high schools, junior colleges, community colleges, and two-year programs at four-year institutions. Generally, however, there have not been many long-term follow-up studies of four-year collegiate programs particularly at the doctoral level. Even then, relatively few relate to this study.

A 1969 master's study by Justis<sup>37</sup> sought to determine the adequacy of the secretarial training of executive assistant and business teacher graduates. Generally, the investigator found that the graduates were adequately trained for the most frequently performed duties. They were confident of their secretarial skills, but less confident in skills in statistics, economics, accounting, and law. The graduates stated, however, that they never used content of classes in algebra, economics, commercial law, statistics, or of lecture classes in office administration. Justis countered these statements by saying that the classes may have contributed to the development of general business understanding.

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<sup>37</sup>Susan Z. Justis, "A Study of the Executive Assistant and Business Teacher Graduates Who Obtained Fulltime Secretarial Employment after Graduation from Brigham Young University, 1963-1968" (Master's thesis, Brigham Young University at Provo, Utah, 1969).

This study did not discuss the level of the secretarial positions obtained.

Also in 1969, Adams'<sup>38</sup> doctoral study investigated the relevance of the curricular programs in secretarial and office administration at Indiana University to the occupational experiences of the graduates. The sample consisted of 114 graduates who obtained a Bachelor of Science in Business with majors in office management or business education between 1950 and 1966. Adams isolated 74 factors from the secretarial and office administration curriculum which she classified under four categories: business administration; secretarial and office administration; general education; and personal and professional competencies. The graduates indicated the extent of use and the adequacy of preparation of each of the factors. In general, Adams found that the programs preparing graduates for high-level secretarial and office administration positions were relevant to the occupational experiences of the graduates. She suggested reduction in the amount of study in the technical skills to permit a greater emphasis in general education and business administration.

To determine whether women graduates who majored in business administration, business education, and related areas were discriminated against in upper-level business or teaching positions, Cranor<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Mary E. Adams, "A Study of the Relevancy of the Indiana University Business Education and Office Management Curricular Programs to the Occupational Experiences of Graduates" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1969).

<sup>39</sup> Toni A. Cranor, "A Study of Employment Practices of Women Graduates in Business Administration and Business Education from Kansas State College of Pittsburg 1965-1970" (Master of Science thesis, Kansas State College of Pittsburg, 1973).

analyzed data from 99 questionnaires and ten interviews received from students who graduated between 1965 and 1970 from Kansas State College. It appeared that women were more discriminated against in the area of business administration than in business education. Over 25 percent expressed regret over their chosen career indicating a need for more study and more counseling regarding opportunities, problems and salaries. Cranor found that the main reasons given by the graduates for women's secondary place in the world of business were social mores and customs, women's feelings of inferiority, and their lack of ambition, as well as the attitudes of men toward women in business.

Despite the fact that the present investigation is a follow-up study, the focus of the follow-up makes it quite dissimilar from most of the follow-up studies that have been made. Therefore, few follow-up studies were included. The three that have been reviewed were discussed because they relate to two factors under consideration; that is, the relevance of the educational background, and the discrimination experienced by women.



### CHAPTER III

#### QUESTIONNAIRE DEVELOPMENT AND DATA SOURCE

The main purpose of the study was to examine the office administration major in terms of the career aspirations and the employment status of its female graduates. The specific areas of interest were: the level of aspiration of the graduates, the level of position attained, the satisfaction with the position, the factors influencing advancement, and the impact of a secretarial background on advancement.

It was the intent of the investigator that the data acquired would assist policy-makers in their discernment of future direction for the program, as well as counselors in their task of providing career advice to students. Therefore, the descriptive-survey method of research was used since, according to Good,<sup>1</sup> descriptive studies gather evidence about current conditions with a forward-looking frame of reference.

This chapter describes the procedure that was followed to accomplish the purpose of the study. It discusses the development of the questionnaire and describes the determination, the collection, and the processing of the data.

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<sup>1</sup>Carter V. Good, Essentials of Educational Research (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1966), p. 192.

### Instrument Development

The alternatives for obtaining the data for this study were limited by time. First, one of the questions dealt with the attainment of high-level positions by the graduates; this process generally takes a number of years. Second, time was important because of the "split level"<sup>2</sup> characteristic of the work pattern of women in which "the periods where women are most likely to work are during ages 20 through 24 and 45 through 54."<sup>3</sup> Therefore, a longitudinal study seemed to be appropriate. According to Wentling and Lawson,<sup>4</sup> the follow-up study differs from most research studies in that a specific group of individuals is the focus, making mobility an inhibitory factor. Name changes of many of the female graduates compound the difficulty. Therefore, it was decided that the mail questionnaire would be the most feasible means of collecting data for a longitudinal study.

### Initial Questionnaire

Based on the subproblems delineated in Chapter I, an eight-page tentative questionnaire was designed. The items constructed were of the dichotomous response, multiple choice, rating, and ranking type.

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<sup>2</sup>U.S., Department of Labor, Wage and Labor Standards Administration, Women's Bureau, Expanding Opportunities for Girls: Their Special Counseling Needs, 1970, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Tim L. Wentling and Tom E. Lawson, Evaluating Occupational Education and Training Programs (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1975), pp. 146-147.

The tentative questionnaire was taken to a consultant in the College of Education for appraisal. Questions that did not pertain specifically to the problem were eliminated; others were added to insure that required data were obtained. Substantial revisions and refinements were made in the wording of the questions; a number of ranking items were redesigned as rating items; and the questions were grouped under five broad areas. The areas were: Evaluation, Personal Information, Employment Status, Job Information, and Advancement.

The section on evaluation contained questions relating to recommendation of the major for women, reasons for entering the program, satisfaction with the major, and advice to curriculum designers.

Personal information consisted of items on the year of graduation, marital status, age, and the number of dependents.

The section on employment status asked for the current employment state of the graduates. It also sought to determine the number of graduates who had not been employed in an office or managerial occupation since graduation as well as their reasons for not, in effect, having used their degree for its obvious purpose.

The questions in the section on job information concerned the level of position obtained by the graduates, the number of years of employment in an office or managerial position, and the satisfaction with the position attained.

The final section on advancement asked questions pertaining to the factors influencing advancement, the importance of the three components of the degree for advancement, the aspirations of the

graduates regarding advancement, and further education or training required for advancement.

Two questions in the instrument, one concerning the level of position attained and the other concerning the satisfaction with the position attained, bear some explaining.

In the first, a direct way to determine the level of position attained would have been to ask the respondents to give their job titles. However, job titles for similar positions vary significantly from organization to organization. In some cases, the same titles may have vastly different job descriptions. Precisely for this reason, studies have analyzed the duties and responsibilities of secretaries, managers, and executives in search of common denominators upon which to draw distinctions. To avoid replicating such studies, when duties and responsibilities in themselves were not of interest to the study, the most common job titles or job levels in the secretarial<sup>5</sup> and managerial<sup>6</sup> career ladders were defined in an attempt to standardize replies, as well as to learn the level of position attained. The graduates were asked to check the definition which best described their position.

In the second, in order to determine the satisfaction of the graduates with specific aspects of their positions, 12 categories or

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<sup>5</sup>U.S., Department of Labor, Manpower Administration, Dictionary of Occupational Titles, vol. 2, Occupational Classification (1965).

<sup>6</sup>Dalton E. McFarland, Management: Principles and Practices (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1974), p. 35.

"career rewards" were delineated. The categories were derived for the most part from Herzberg's<sup>7</sup> two-factor theory. In the two-factor theory, job content factors, such as, advancement, responsibility, and possible growth are associated with the work itself and its achievement and reward the needs of the individual to reach his aspirations. Job context factors, such as, supervision, interpersonal relations, salary, and the like, meet the needs of the individual to avoid unpleasant situations. Both serve as goals; but the former, according to Herzberg, motivates whereas the latter merely reduces dissatisfaction.

As a result of extensive redesigning and editing, a five-page questionnaire was designed.

#### Validation of the Questionnaire

The instrument was reviewed by three staff members and three students from Michigan State University to determine its face validity. All participants in the evaluation were interviewed for their comments and suggestions. One professor with a joint assignment in business law and office administration and in secondary education suggested rating the categories in three questions instead of ranking them because of the difficulty of making many fine distinctions. Another professor from the department of business law and office administration indicated that a question on evaluation of the degree program was ambiguous. The third staff member, who had a part-time assignment in business law and

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<sup>7</sup>Frederick Herzberg, Bernard Mausner, and Barbara B. Snyderman, The Motivation to Work (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1959), pp. 113-114.

office administration, and who had been employed as a secretary formerly, suggested adding a question. The three students, senior office administration majors, were generally enthusiastic about the questionnaire. Two of them made the same observations as those noted by staff members.

The instrument was then taken to a second consultant. With her help, the suggestions of the reviewers were incorporated resulting in the redesign of two questions and the transformation of all ranking scales to rating scales. As well, four questions with dichotomous responses were changed to Likert-type responses to give respondents a wider range of choice.

#### Instrument Reliability

To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, a test-retest measure was sought. During the summer of 1977, a cover letter, questionnaire, and return envelope were sent to a random sample of 90 of the 176 respondents. Thirty-one questionnaires or 34.4 percent were answered. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a Pearson product-moment correlation was calculated and a test-retest reliability coefficient of .94 was obtained. This value indicated a high degree of consistency in interpretation of the questionnaire items and, hence, consistency of measurement. A face comparison of the questionnaire answers revealed substantial agreement in the items.

### Data Source

The female graduates of the office administration major who earned a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Michigan State University were the source of data. As noted in Chapter I, the university graduated its first secretarial majors in 1954. The first task, therefore, was to ascertain the availability of current addresses of the graduates. It was found that curriculum coding was begun with machine registration in 1938, and major coding for all programs was established in 1958. With permission from the committee on release of confidential information and approval of questionnaires in the Office of Institutional Research, a printout containing the names, last-known addresses, marital status, and year of graduation of all office administration majors from 1954 to 1976 was obtained from the Alumni Office.

### Sample

The printout, which contained 220 names, was double-checked with student listings found in commencement programs, in College of Business files, in student directories and in the registrar's office. This process revealed that eleven names of two-year terminal secretarial students and business teacher education students were inadvertently included in the printout, and that fifteen names were missing. The revised list consisted of 229 graduates from 1955 through 1976. It was decided to drop the five 1976 graduates because they would have less than a full year's occupational employment upon which to draw experience. Four other names were deleted: two male graduates and

two deceased female graduates. Except for these nine graduates, the entire population constituted the sample for the study.

The final revision listed the names of 220 graduates; one name had no known address, 32 had a parent's address, and the remainder had a last-known address as well as a parent's address in most cases.

### Data Collection

During the spring of 1977, the questionnaire, a cover letter, and a return envelope, exhibited in Appendix A and Appendix B, were mailed to each of the 219 graduates for whom there were addresses. Questionnaires returned because of incorrect addresses were mailed again if a second address were available. At the end of three weeks with a return of 55.3 percent, a second letter, questionnaire, and return envelope were sent to those who had not responded (Appendix C). After an additional two weeks and a return of 67.6 percent, a third letter, questionnaire, and return envelope were sent to a number of nonrespondents and telephone requests were made to the remaining nonrespondents. Of the 17 calls completed, 14 graduates were contacted. Twelve said they would answer the questionnaire (nine actually did) and two said they would not. Only two of the 178 questionnaires returned were not used, one because the respondent had not obtained a degree, and the other because it came after the data were tabulated.

A total of 176 questionnaires were usable yielding a return rate of 80.4 percent. No current address could be found for 21 (9.5 percent) of the graduates. Table 1 summarizes the responses for each of the 21 years.



Table 1. Responses to Follow-Up of Female Graduates of the Secretarial/  
Office Administration Major, 1955 through 1975

Year of Graduation	Total Number of Graduates	Addresses Unknown	Total Number of Responses
1955	5	-	4
1956	4	2	2
1957	10	1	8
1958	11	2	8
1959	7	-	6
1960	15	-	13
1961	5	-	5
1962	11	5	4
1963	9	1	5
1964	14	-	14
1965	14	-	12
1966	14	1	13
1967	20 <sup>a</sup>	2	14
1968	10	-	10
1969	17 <sup>a</sup>	-	16
1970	9	1	8
1971	7	-	5
1972	11	2	9
1973	4	2	2
1974	13	1	10
1975	10	1	8
Total	220	21	176

<sup>a</sup>It was learned during the survey that two graduates were deceased.

### Analysis Techniques

The data received from the graduates were transferred to data coding forms. From these forms, the data were punched onto IBM cards. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to compute the frequencies and percentages. The absolute frequency, the relative frequency, the cumulative frequency, and the mean were obtained for each item. The computer was also used for cross-tabulation purposes.

Questions with "other" categories and comments of the graduates were typed on index cards for later reporting.

## CHAPTER IV

### ANALYSIS OF FOLLOW-UP DATA

The analysis of the data obtained from the office administration majors who responded to the questionnaire is presented in two parts.

In the first part of the chapter, personal information concerning the graduates as well as their present employment status is analyzed. The response of nine participants who had not been employed in an office occupation since graduation is also summarized.

In the second part, the sections of the questionnaire entitled Evaluation, Job Information, and Advancement are discussed. These data pertain directly to the six subproblems described in Chapter I.

#### Personal Data and Current Employment Status

The criterion for participation in the study was the earning of a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration with a major in Office Administration. Thus, included in the study were those graduates who had not been employed in an office or managerial position since graduation. These respondents answered only three sections: Personal Data, Employment Status, and Evaluation of the major.

The personal data obtained from the graduates were the period of graduation, marital status, age, and number of dependents. The current employment status further delineated the profile of the respondents.

### Period of Graduation

A total of 176 graduates were included in the study. In Table 2, the number of responses received from four periods during the 21 years is indicated.

Table 2. Period in Which Graduates Earned the Baccalaureate Degree

Period of Graduation	Number	Percent
1955-1959	28	15.9
1960-1964	41	23.3
1965-1969	65	36.9
1970-1975	42	23.9
Total	176	100.0

The largest frequency of response was received from participants who graduated between 1965-1969. On the average, there were 13 responses for each year between 1965-1969 compared to an overall average of 8 responses for each year.

The frequency of response during the 21 years generally reflects the increase in enrollment of women at the university during the sixties, and the decline in popularity of secretarial programs at the university level during the seventies.

### Marital Status

The marital status of the graduates summarized in Table 3 was 30 (17 percent) single; 137 (77.8 percent) married; and the remaining 9 (5.1 percent) widowed or divorced.

Table 3. Marital Status of Graduates

Marital Status	Number	Percent
Single	30	17.0
Married	137	77.8
Divorced	6	3.4
Widowed	3	1.7
Total	176	99.9 <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Percentages add to 99.9 due to rounding.

Whereas census figures for 1975 reveal that 78 percent of all women in the general population were married and 22 percent were single,<sup>1</sup> the proportions in this study were 82.9 percent married and 17 percent single. Divorced and widowed rates in the general population were 6 percent and 15 percent, respectively, compared to 3.4 percent divorced and 1.7 percent widowed in the study.

### Age

The largest frequency of response came from the 32-37 age group (38.1 percent) as seen in Table 4; the smallest frequency of response came from the 44-49 age group (1.7 percent). The small response in the latter group may be due to the fact that the majority of the oldest graduates were still in the 38-43 age range.

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<sup>1</sup>U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, A Statistical Portrait of Women in the U.S., Current Population Reports, Special Studies Series p-23, No. 58 (1976), p. 67.

Table 4. Age of Graduates

Age	Number	Percent
25 or under	17	9.7
26-31	49	27.8
32-37	67	38.1
38-43	39	22.2
44-49	3	1.7
50 or over	0	0.0
No response	1	0.6
Total	176	100.1

Dependents

None of the graduates had dependents other than children. Sixty-one (34.7 percent) had no children. Of the 115 women with children, 65 (36.9 percent) women had two children (Table 5).

Table 5. Number of Children of Graduates

Children	Number	Percent
None	61	34.7
1	20	11.4
2	65	36.9
3	27	15.3
4	2	1.1
5	1	0.6
Total	176	100.0

### Employment Status

Table 6 shows that 124 (59.1 percent) of the graduates were employed: 82 (46.6 percent) full time and 22 (12.5 percent) part time. Of the 72 (40.9 percent) graduates presently unemployed, two were seeking employment.

Table 6. Current Employment Status of Graduates

Employment Status	Number	Percent
Employed full time	82	46.6
Employed part time	22	12.5
Unemployed but seeking employment	2	1.1
Unavailable for employment	70	39.8
Total	176	100.0

In 1975, the labor force participation of women who had four or more years of college was 64.1 percent.<sup>2</sup> This percentage is considerably higher than the 46.6 percent full-time employed represented in this study, or the 59.1 percent full-time and part-time employed figures combined. However, the figures in this study are no doubt skewed because no participant was over 50 years of age.

The reasons given by 73 graduates for present unavailability for employment are summarized in Table 7.

Thirty-seven (21 percent) checked "housewife" as the reason for unemployment. Several of this number modified "housewife" by adding

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

"with small children," or "and mother." In a number of cases, the respondents checked "housewife" and "not interested in employment"; when this occurred, the latter response was tabulated since it seemed to add another dimension. One respondent added "now" to "not interested in employment."

Table 7. Reasons for Current Unemployment of Graduates

Reason	Number	Percent
Housewife	37	21.0
Pregnancy	3	1.7
Attending school	4	2.3
Not interested in employment	15	8.5
Ill health	0	0.0
Other	14	7.8
Total	73 <sup>a</sup>	41.3

<sup>a</sup>Three of the part-time employed graduates also gave reasons.

Fourteen (7.8 percent) filled in "other." Eight of the 14 pertained to remarks regarding the care of young children. The remaining reasons listed were:

- Starting my own business.
- Currently serving my community.
- Too much volunteer work.
- No opportunities in a rural area.
- Recently moved to Florida and plan to seek reemployment later.
- Worked full time in NYC until following husband to Brussels in November 1976. Not eligible for work permit here.

Nine of the 176 graduates had never been employed in an office or managerial position. Their reasons are summarized in Table 8.



Table 8. Reasons Graduates Have Not Been Employed in an Office or Managerial Occupation Since Graduation

Reason	Number	Percent
Marriage/family obligations	3	1.7
Prefer other work	2	1.1
Educated/trained for other work	3	1.7
Salary too low	0	0.0
Jobs not available	0	0.0
Other	1	0.6
Total	9	5.4

"Marriage/family obligations" and "education/training for other work" were the two main reasons checked by the nine graduates. These graduates were eliminated from the remainder of the study.

Table 9 summarizes the personal data of the 167 graduates, who were employed in an office or managerial occupation at some time during the 21 years of the study, according to their current employment status.

Typically, if the office administration graduate were employed full time (47.3 percent), she graduated between 1970-1975, was married, was between 26-31 years of age, and had no children. If part-time employed (11.4 percent), she graduated between 1955-1959, was married, was between 38-43 years of age, and had two children. And, if she were presently unemployed (41.3 percent), she graduated between 1965-1969, was married, was between 32-37 years of age, and had two children.

Table 9. Demographic Profile of Full-Time Employed, Part-Time Employed, and Unemployed Graduates with Office or Managerial Occupational Experience

Variable	Full-Time Employed Graduates (N=79)		Part-Time Employed Graduates (N=19)		Unemployed Graduates (N=69)		Total Graduates (N=167)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<u>Period of Graduation:</u>								
1955-1959	10	6.0	8	4.8	9	5.4	27	16.2
1960-1964	17	10.2	1	0.6	21	12.6	39	23.4
1965-1969	22	13.1	6	3.6	33	19.8	61	36.5
1970-1975	30	18.0	4	2.4	6	3.6	40	24.0
<u>Marital Status:</u>								
Single	29	17.4	0	0.0	1	0.6	30	18.0
Married	44	26.3	17	10.2	67	40.1	128	76.6
Divorced	5	3.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	6	3.6
Widowed	1	0.6	1	0.6	1	0.6	3	1.8
<u>Age:</u>								
25 or under	14	8.4	1	0.6	2	1.2	17	10.2
26-31	30	18.0	5	3.0	12	7.2	47	28.1
32-37	20	12.0	3	1.8	39	23.3	62	37.1
38-43	14	8.4	8	4.8	16	9.6	38	22.8
44-49	1	0.6	2	1.2	0	0.0	3	1.8
50 or over	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
<u>Dependents:</u>								
None	52	31.1	3	1.8	5	3.0	60	35.9
1 child	10	6.0	2	1.2	6	3.6	18	10.8
2 children	13	7.8	9	5.4	39	23.3	61	36.5
3 children	3	1.8	4	2.4	18	10.8	25	15.0
4 children	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.6	2	1.2
5 children	0	0.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	1	0.6

### Summary

The first part of Chapter IV pertained to the analysis of the demographic data and the current employment status of 176 graduates. This total included nine graduates who had never been employed in an office or managerial occupation since their graduation. The greatest number of graduates (26.9 percent) represented the years between 1965-1969. Over 77 percent of the graduates were married. The largest number of responses came from the 32-37 age group (38.1 percent). Sixty-five (36.9 percent) of the graduates had two children and 61 (34.7 percent) had none. Of the 176 graduates, 46.6 percent were full-time employed, 40.9 percent were unemployed, and 12.5 percent were part-time employed. The two main reasons given by the nine graduates for not having had occupational experience in office or managerial positions were marriage and family obligations and education or training for other work.

### Analysis of Findings Pertaining to Subproblems

Six subproblems or questions were formulated to articulate the main areas of interest in relation to the graduates of the office administration major. The areas of interest were the underlying factors influencing the graduates' work life, such as, aspiration, level of position attained, satisfaction with the position obtained, and advancement. The particular jobs held, with their duties and responsibilities, and the adequacy of the program to meet job requirements were not investigated.

The sections of the questionnaire designed specifically to answer the subproblems were Job Information, Advancement, and Evaluation. The nine respondents who did not have office or managerial employment experience were eliminated from the analysis.

#### Subproblem 1

Do graduates of the office administration program obtain high-level secretarial positions, middle-management positions, and/or executive positions?

Job titles. The most common job levels within the secretarial and managerial classification were defined to standardize replies. The graduates were asked to check the definition which best described their position.

Table 10 presents the results. Of the 167 graduates, 49 (29.3 percent) chose Executive Secretary, while 48 (28.7 percent) chose Secretary. These two job levels, therefore, accounted for 58 percent of the graduates.

At the secretarial level, the positions of executive secretary and administrative assistant were defined as high-level positions. Therefore, 75 (44.9 percent) of the graduates were presently employed, or had been employed, in a high-level secretarial position. Only 26 (15.6 percent) of the graduates reported being in managerial positions (excluding those in the "other" category). Of these graduates, 8.4 percent were office managers which was defined as the lowest or supervisory level of management. A total of 12 (7.2 percent) of the graduates reported being employed as executives or department

Table 10. Job Titles Which Most Closely Describe the Current or Last Position Held in an Office or Managerial Occupation

Job Title	Number	Percent
Administrative Assistant	26	15.6
Executive Secretary	49	29.3
Secretary	48	28.7
Office Manager	14	8.4
Department Head/Division Manager	10	6.0
Executive	2	1.2
Other	18	10.8
Total	167	100.0

heads/division managers. These levels were defined as top-management and middle-management positions.

Census statistics<sup>3</sup> indicate that 6.8 percent of all women who have four or more years of college are managers and administrators. If one considers managers and administrators to denote middle- or upper-management positions, the graduates in this study correspond closely to the national norm. If supervisory positions are included in the category of managers and administrators, a higher proportion of women in this study had managerial positions than do women in the general population.

In the category "other," the following titles were given by the graduates:

---

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<u>Titles</u>	<u>Number</u>
Staff Auditor; Auditor . . . . .	2
Product Representative; Sales Representative . . .	2
Education Representative <sup>a</sup> . . . . .	1
Instructor; Teacher <sup>a</sup> . . . . .	2
Department Store Buyer; Assistant Buyer <sup>a</sup> . . . . .	2
Budget Analyst . . . . .	1
Associate Systems Engineer (IBM) <sup>a</sup> . . . . .	1
First Level Management (Bell Telephone) . . . . .	1
Account Clerk . . . . .	1
College Graduate-in-Training (managerial) . . . . .	1
Medical Transcriptionist <sup>b</sup> . . . . .	1
Technical Literature Specialist <sup>a</sup> . . . . .	1
Legislative Assistant (House of Representatives) .	1
Special Needs Coordinator . . . . .	<u>1</u>
Total . . . . .	18

<sup>a</sup>N = 5 unemployed.

<sup>b</sup>N = 1 part-time employed.

Twelve of the 18 titles were listed by graduates who are presently full-time employed. The titles appear to range from the clerical level to the executive level. However, without a job description they cannot be categorized.

A number of the graduates commented on their experience in obtaining their present positions. A 1964 graduate wrote:

MSU's Secretarial Administration program was excellent for me. Ten years ago, I began working for the Trust Department of a bank as a secretary and five years later was made an officer. When I left two months ago, I was in charge of all department operations. I was not, however, receiving pay commensurate with my workload and responsibilities. Two years ago, I returned to college and picked up accounting courses which in effect gave me a major in accounting. This enabled me to sit for the CPA exam. I have passed the exam and am now working for a CPA firm and in two years will receive my certificate.

On the other hand, a 1965 graduate commented:

I am a Systems Engineering Manager with IBM and have ten individuals working for me. After working for General Motors for one year as a secretary (and hating it), I joined IBM as a Systems Engineer. Since then I've held positions as a Marketing Representative, Regional Industry Specialist and in IBM internal education, and for the last year as a manager. I've enjoyed each position tremendously and would highly recommend a business major (marketing, management, accounting) for a female in school today--but I would never suggest a secretarial major.

Similarly, a 1969 graduate who is now staff auditor wrote:

Upon graduation, the only available positions were in steno pools where I was told I would remain for three months to five years. After having just completed five years at MSU, that was not for me, so I accepted a position in accounting. I have stayed with that field since.

More positively, a 1970 graduate said:

I presently work for a large Detroit bank and have advanced fairly quickly even though I have been there only two years and worked in a secretarial position four years prior. Being black and female has been helpful during a time when employers are trying to increase employment in these areas.

Five of the full-time employed graduates, who checked one of the title options, commented that they were currently employed in another profession--four in teaching and one in computer programming. Two of the part-time employed also had taught. Of those presently unemployed, four had taught. In all, 14 of the 167 graduates reported from 3 to 15 years of teaching experience.

Cross tabulation of the job titles with the period of graduation as shown in Table 11 indicates that the position of administrative assistant was held more often by graduates in the 1970-1975 period than in other periods. The managerial positions, on the other hand,

Table 11. Level of Position by Period of Graduation

Job Title	1955- 1959	1960- 1964	1965- 1969	1970- 1975	Total Graduates
Administrative Assistant	3	6	5	12	26
Executive Secretary	11	13	16	9	49
Secretary	9	11	18	10	48
Office Manager	0	4	5	5	14
Department Head/ Division Manager	2	2	6	0	10
Executive	0	0	2	0	2
Other	2	3	9	4	18
Total	27	39	61	40	167

were most often attained by the 1965-1969 group. It seems probable that the latter group obtained managerial positions partly because of their employment experience.

Length of employment. Several studies reviewed in Chapter II indicated a relationship between duration of employment and level of position attained. The graduates were asked how many years they had been employed in an office or managerial position. Table 12 shows that the length of employment in office-related positions varied from a high of 98 graduates (58.7 percent) who were employed from 1 to 5 years to a low of 1 graduate (0.1 percent) who was employed over 20 years. These data do not include employment in other professions. Three of the graduates who worked for less than a year are currently full-time employed. They stopped working because of family responsibilities. One is now teaching full time, one is a half-time secretary and half-time insurance adjuster, and one is a special needs coordinator.



Table 12. Total Number of Years Employed in an Office or Managerial Position

Years	Number	Percent
Under 1 year	4	2.4
1-5 years	98	58.7
6-10 years	41	24.6
11-15 years	17	10.2
16-20 years	6	3.6
Over 20 years	1	0.6
Total	167	100.1

When the data relative to job title and length of employment are combined in Table 13, the data does not expand the preceding observation other than to emphasize that the highest concentration of graduates employed in office-related occupations worked for one to five years as secretaries and executive secretaries.

Graduates from every age group commented on their experiences in attempting to move from one level of position to another. A 1958 graduate with 6 to 10 years of experience wrote:

I have been in my present job three-and-one-half years. In the past year and a half I have been actively seeking more responsibility, more diversified duties as opposed to secretarial duties, but even with the undertaking of new responsibilities and duties and really caring to improve our department, I am still, in administration's eyes, a secretary and that is what is discouraging!

A 1969 graduate with five years of experience had the following to say:

I feel once one becomes a secretary, it is most difficult to step into management positions. One must write a resume stressing the few management tasks one has performed. When interviewing for secretarial positions, I found myself frequently asked why I wasn't applying for

Table 13. Level of Position by Length of Employment in an Office or Managerial Position

Job Titles	Length of Employment						Total
	Under 1 Year	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	16-20 Years	Over 20	
Administrative Assistant	0	17	5	2	2	0	26
Executive Secretary	0	27	14	5	2	1	49
Secretary	3	31	10	2	2	0	48
Office Manager	0	7	3	4	0	0	14
Department Head/Division Manager	0	5	2	3	0	0	10
Executive	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Other	1	0	5	1	1	0	8
Total	4	98	40	17	7	1	167

a management position. Yet when I applied for a management position I was turned down flat. . . . I do feel that my college degree has benefited me by starting salaries being higher than those of high school graduates and has permitted me to start at higher levels within the secretarial field, but then there are fewer promotions at the higher levels without having a degree in management or administration.

And a 1971 graduate added:

I have found that the term "secretary" is applied to everything from clerk-typist to office manager and because of this the most highly trained, skilled secretaries are also the most poorly paid.

Salary. As an indicator of the level of position attained, the graduates were asked to report the salary range of their most recent office position. Since 69 (41.9 percent) of the graduates were not presently employed and 19 (11.4 percent) were part-time employed, the responses were tabulated according to the current employment status of the graduates to obtain a truer picture of the current salary received. The results are reported in Table 14.

Considered in totality, the highest responses were from 49 (29.3 percent) of the graduates who received from \$7,500 to \$9,999, and 44 (26.3 percent) who received from \$10,000 to \$14,999. These two groups constituted 55.6 percent of the graduates of whom 29.9 percent were full-time employed. In all, 54 (32.4 percent) of the 79 full-time employed graduates received over \$10,000 in salary. Of the 6 who received over \$20,000, 5 were presently employed. Only 1 of the part-time employed received over \$10,000, while 12 of the unemployed graduates had received as much before leaving their positions.

Table 14. Salary Range of Graduates by Current Employment Status

Salary Range	Full-Time Employed		Part-Time Employed		Unemployed		Total Graduates	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Under \$4,999	2	1.2	5	3.0	4	2.4	11	6.6
\$5,000-\$7,499	4	2.4	4	2.4	23	13.8	31	18.6
\$7,500-\$9,999	17	10.2	7	4.2	25	15.0	49	29.3
\$10,000-\$14,999	33	19.7	1	0.6	10	6.0	44	26.3
\$15,000-\$19,999	16	9.6	0	0.0	1	0.6	17	10.2
\$20,000 or over	5	3.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	6	3.6
No response	2	1.2	2	1.2	5	3.0	9	5.4
Total	79	47.3	19	11.4	69	41.4	167	100.0

Many of the graduates' comments concerned salary. A graduate, who began the degree program from 1953 to 1956 and returned in 1974 to complete it, wrote at length. A few excerpts pertinent to the previous discussion follow:

I outgrew the secretarial level positions almost immediately and began taking on more and more management related projects within secretarial positions held. Employers were delighted to have this work done; praised me highly and encouraged more of it. . . . However, when I began applying for and seeking the management positions for which I felt qualified and capable of performing, I became a threat and suddenly all kinds of games began to be played. . . . If I were willing to continue to do the work of the managers but at a lower salary (\$10,000/year), approximately half that of similar management positions, I would be working now.

Another recent graduate made the following observation:

A secretarial background automatically puts you in a subservient position to management--especially if you are a woman. There is a deep chasm between management and secretarial help even though many secretaries would be equally competent, if not more than their bosses, because they know the "grassroots" of their business. Salaries are too low to take four years of college to become a secretary and end up in a dead-end job--which is what many secretarial jobs are.

And another graduate remarked:

Near the beginning of my employment, I took over some jobs that management trainees were doing (they made twice the salary). My salary stayed the same. After I left, the jobs went back to the men. I was too naive to question.

Summary. The first subproblem in this study dealt with the level of position attained by the majors of the office administration program. Executive secretarial positions were held by 29.3 percent of the graduates with 28.7 percent holding secretarial positions.

Administrative assistant positions were held by 15.6 percent of the graduates. Managerial positions were held by 15.6 percent of the graduates with 8.4 percent of these positions being that of office manager. The majority of the graduates (58.7 percent) were employed one to five years in secretarial or executive secretarial positions. A number of the graduates expressed the opinion that it was difficult to move from the secretarial level to the managerial level.

### Subproblem 2

Do women with an office administration major aspire to obtain management or executive positions? If so, when do they develop these aspirations?

Career aspirations. In order to determine the career aspirations of the graduates, they were asked to indicate their reason for choosing the office administration major. Those who indicated they wanted a high-level secretarial position or, ultimately, a management position, were considered to have a high aspiration level. The categories into which the responses fell are shown in Table 15.

Fifty-seven (34.1 percent) of the graduates chose "as a means to obtain a high-level secretarial position," while 43 (25.7 percent) chose "as a 'stepping stone' into a management position." These two groups indicated that 59.8 percent of the graduates had high levels of aspiration. Of the remaining 40.2 percent, 36 (21.6 percent) chose the major because "secretarial skills insure steady employment."

Table 15. Reasons for Choosing the Office Administration Major

Reason	Number	Percent
Because secretarial skills insure steady employment	36	21.6
Because of the influence of my family	9	5.4
As a means to obtain a high-level secretarial position	57	34.1
As a "stepping stone" into a management position	43	25.7
Because I liked the secretarial courses I took in high school	11	6.6
Other	10	6.0
No response	1	0.6
Total	167	100.0

In the "other" category, the following reasons were stated:

<u>Reasons for Choosing the Major</u>	<u>Number</u>
Interested in business . . . . .	4
Changed majors and chose executive secretarial to graduate on schedule . . . . .	3
Directed by counselors . . . . .	3
Did not want to teach . . . . .	1
Did secretarial work one summer and changed major to office administration program . . . . .	<u>1</u>
Total . . . . .	12

A number of comments were made that have a bearing on career aspirations. A 1975 graduate, who aspired to a management position, wrote:

Would be interested to find out what types of job I may be qualified for besides secretarial. There is too little "thinking" or creative work as a secretary. There should be more counseling while attending college as to career aspirations.

A 1967 graduate with the same aspirations noted:

In my brief working career, I found no opportunities for women in certain offices to reach a managerial position through secretarial work. Men needed to give up responsibilities to their secretaries. I found the secretarial work boring and frustrating--with no room to increase duties.

These two graduates worked for less than five years after graduation.

A 1968 graduate who has worked full time since graduation had the following to say:

At the end of my four years, when I began to interview it became obvious to some of us in the secretarial major that we had made a big mistake--that this was not the way into the business world. I am very bitter about being in this field as the business people of the nation tend to stereotype secretaries as being incapable of executive positions. A gal with a business major in almost any other field has a better chance of obtaining an executive position. This field should not be represented as the door through which all women should enter business.

Another graduate who aspired to a high-level secretarial position and was employed as a secretary for 11 years remarked:

My secretarial work was very rewarding for the first five to six years, but I soon felt I was capable of more than typing other people's materials. I returned part time to work on a MA in family studies to be completed June 1977.

A statement of a 1968 graduate seemed to sum up the views of a number of the graduates:

If your goal is to stay in the secretarial field, with this major you'll be at the top or get there quickly with no problem. But if your idea was the "stepping stone," it doesn't work. You need a more specific major to enter into a specific area!

To estimate how career oriented the graduates actually were, they were asked, "If you were offered a higher position which required



relocation, would you accept it?" Table 16 reveals that the majority (62.3 percent) responded "no."

Table 16. Graduates' Responses to Hypothetical Offer of a Higher Position Requiring Relocation

Responses	Number	Percent
Yes	47	28.1
No	104	62.3
Don't know; it depends	8	4.8
No response	8	4.8
Total	167	100.0

When, however, the graduates were categorized according to their current employment status, distinct differences were seen between the groups as shown in Table 17.

Table 17. Responses to Hypothetical Offer for a Higher Position Requiring Relocation by Current Employment Status

Response	Full-Time Employed		Part-Time Employed		Unemployed		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	38	22.8	5	3.0	4	2.4	47
No	34	20.3	12	7.2	58	34.7	104
Don't know; it depends	5	3.0	0	0.0	3	1.8	8
No response	2	1.2	2	1.2	4	2.4	8
Total	79	47.3	19	11.4	69	41.3	167

Of the full-time employed graduates, 38 responded "yes" and 34 responded "no," whereas 12 out of the 19 part-time employed and 58 out of the 69 unemployed graduates responded "no." These data may reflect the fact that 29 of the full-time employed graduates were single and had no dependents. This speculation seems to be substantiated by the fact that marriage and family responsibilities outweighed other reasons given by 96 of the graduates for not relocating.

<u>Reasons for Not Relocating</u>	<u>Number</u>
Family obligations; marriage and family; children at school . . . . .	29
Husband's job comes first . . . . .	24
Husband owns business; can't (or won't) relocate . . . . .	13
Would accept if family could move . . . . .	6
Like where I am . . . . .	4
Husband's job and children . . . . .	4
Have built a new home . . . . .	2
Separation from family, friends, interests . . .	3
Husband is sole supporter of family . . . . .	3
Not financially worthwhile . . . . .	2
Plan to work for a short time . . . . .	1
Fulfilled in present situation . . . . .	1
Family health problem . . . . .	1
Depends on location; not unless top-level position . . . . .	2
Social and financial adjustment as a widow . . .	1
Total . . . . .	<u>96</u>

It would appear, also, that many of the women considered their husband's career to be more important than their own--perhaps because they had given up their own career to raise a family.

Acquisition of career aspirations. While reasons given by the graduates for choosing the office administration major indicated those who were interested in moving into a managerial position before entering

university, or while at university, it did not account for those who might have developed such aspirations later in their work life. Hence, the question was posed: "If you have ambitions for a managerial or executive position when did you acquire them?" Table 18 shows that 17 (10.2 percent) of the graduates said they acquired such ambitions "before going to university," and 16 (9.6 percent) said "while at university." Together, these represented 19.8 percent of the graduates which is lower than the 25 percent previously illustrated in Table 15. When one examines all the responses, it appears that 111 (66.5 percent) eventually acquired ambitions for a managerial or executive position including responses from the "other" category.

Table 18. Period in Which Graduates Acquired Ambitions for a Managerial or Executive Position

Period of Time	Number	Percent
Before going to university	17	10.2
While at university	16	9.6
Early in my employment history	45	26.9
After working for 5 years	24	14.4
I am happy where I am	25	15.0
Other	16	9.6
No response	24	14.4
Total	167	100.1

In the "other" category, the following statements were made:

<u>Period When Ambitions Acquired</u>	<u>Number</u>
After working 2 or 3 years as a secretary . . .	2
After being unemployed a number of years . . . .	3
After my family was raised . . . . .	2
Didn't have career ambitions . . . . .	2
Just recently; in the last few years . . . . .	2
No longer have such ambitions . . . . .	1
Tend to be interested in other things now . . .	1
N/A (Changed to another career) . . . . .	<u>3</u>
Total . . . . .	16

One of the two graduates who said they did not have career aspirations made the following observation:

Never wanted a working career. Wanted to go to college for the educational experience and to develop a skill (in case I ever needed to work). Worked at General Motors only until children came along. Might go back to work when children are older--but only for fun, not to achieve administrative-managerial employment type "career."

Twenty-four (14.4 percent) of the graduates did not respond to the question. This represents a rather large number. By grouping the graduates according to their current employment status, however, it was determined that 23 nonrespondents were presently unemployed (Table 19). They may have been unable to recall the answer, or unwilling to say they were not ambitious for a managerial position. In each group, more graduates appeared to acquire their aspiration after they had been employed for some time, than before or during their university training.

Table 19. Period in Which Graduates Acquired Ambitions for Managerial or Executive Positions by Current Employment Status

Period of Time	Full-Time Employed		Part-Time Employed		Unemployed		Total No.
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Before going to university	7	4.2	2	1.2	8	4.8	17
While at university	9	5.4	1	0.6	6	3.6	16
Early in employment history	25	15.0	6	3.6	14	8.4	45
After working for 5 years	12	7.2	4	2.4	8	4.8	24
I am happy where I am	18	10.7	2	1.2	5	3.0	25
Other	7	4.2	4	2.4	5	3.0	16
No response	1	0.6	0	0.0	23	13.8	24
Total	79	47.3	19	11.4	69	41.4	167

The work of Hennig and Jardim<sup>4</sup> corroborate this trend. In their study of women in managerial positions, they found that women typically made a "conscious commitment to advancement"<sup>5</sup> after they had been working for ten or more years. Their late career decision may be related to the fact that most women do not expect to support themselves all their lives.

Two graduates who aspired for high-level secretarial positions had the following things to say:

After graduation I worked as a secretary for GM central office one-and-one-half years, because I could get more money there than at a small company--I did not care for it at all. I then found out about the computer related jobs at IBM, applied, and was hired and completely trained by them. A college degree was required, but the major was

<sup>4</sup>Margaret Hennig and Anne Jardim, The Managerial Woman (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1977), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

not important. If a woman wants to be a secretary, I think the Executive Secretarial Administration major is fine. If she wants to be a manager (no secretarial work) she should pursue those courses that apply to the type of business she's interested in.

When I started working after graduation at Arthur Anderson & Co. (accounting firm), I came to realize that they only considered my good secretarial skills and if I wanted to advance in their area of specialty, I should have had a business and/or accounting degree. As it was, I wasn't sure what I wanted and was content with my secretarial position.

A graduate with 6 to 10 years of working experience made the following statement:

I was an "executive" secretary before we started our family. After a year at home, I took a one-half time secretarial position. It, of course, was not as challenging nor had the opportunities that a full-time position could offer. Therefore, when I decide to go back to work, I will be looking for another executive secretarial position, or an administrative assistant position. I feel that having a four-year degree was a great help in getting my past jobs. I have found that it has been my own misgivings of leaving children and home that have held me back from discovering my full career potential. But, that has been my choice and not the lack of ability and training making the limitations for me.

Summary. In subproblem two, the question concerned the career aspirations of the graduates. Of the 167 graduates, 59.8 percent indicated having high aspirations. Of this group, 25.7 percent stated that they entered the program to obtain a managerial position. Over 62 percent of the graduates said they would not relocate for a higher position. Of the 28.1 percent who said they would relocate, 23.8 percent were presently full-time employed. Generally, marriage, family responsibilities, and the husband's career were the reasons given for not relocating. Aspirations for a managerial or executive position

were acquired by 20 to 25 percent of the graduates before they left university, and 40 to 45 percent later in life.

### Subproblem 3

Are the graduates of the office administration major satisfied with the career rewards received from the positions they obtain?

The graduates were asked: "In general, how do you feel about the work you do?" Table 20 indicates that 97 (58.1 percent) of the graduates replied that they liked it very much and 46 (27.5 percent) replied that they liked it somewhat. Therefore, 85.6 percent of the majors appeared to like their work in varying degrees.

In order to determine the satisfaction of the graduates with specific aspects of their positions, 12 categories or "career rewards" were delineated.

Table 20. Graduates' Feelings About the Work They Do

Feelings About Work	Number	Percent
Like it very much	97	58.1
Like it somewhat	46	27.5
Neither like nor dislike it	4	2.4
Dislike it somewhat	13	7.8
Dislike it very much	2	1.2
No response	5	3.0
Total	167	100.1

The results, summarized in Table 21, indicate that job security was given the highest number of "very satisfied" responses--99 or 59.3 percent. It was followed by working conditions (47.3 percent), type of boss (46.7 percent), and nature of the work (46.1 percent). Therefore, the highest degree of satisfaction of the graduates was expressed in terms of the job context, with the work itself coming in fourth place. When the "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses are considered together, the only factor in which less than 50 percent of the graduates expressed some degree of satisfaction was potential for advancement (49.7 percent). Not surprisingly, the same factor received the largest number of "dissatisfied" (21.6 percent) responses and "very dissatisfied" (7.8 percent) responses. It was followed by salary, challenge of the work, and opportunity for self-growth. With the exception of salary, all these factors were associated with the work itself. The graduates, also, expressed the greatest amount of uncertainty about their potential for advancement and their opportunity for self-growth. Judging from the responses, therefore, the greatest rewards pertained to the conditions surrounding the job rather than to the work itself and personal achievement. The data appear to indicate, however, that most of the graduates were generally satisfied with their career rewards.

The comments relating to job satisfaction generally centered around salary, potential for advancement, and responsibility. A 1957 graduate who had worked for 6 to 10 years wrote:



Table 21. Degree of Satisfaction Expressed by Graduates with Their Current or Last Position Held (N = 167)

Job Factor	Very Satisfied		Satisfied		Uncertain		Dissatisfied		Very Dissatisfied	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nature of the work	77	46.1	68	40.7	5	3.0	15	9.0	1	0.6
Variety in the work	73	43.7	56	33.5	14	8.4	21	12.6	2	1.2
Opportunity for self-growth	49	29.3	52	31.1	31	18.6	21	12.6	13	7.8
Potential for advancement	35	21.0	48	28.7	34	20.4	36	21.6	13	7.8
Challenge of the work	61	36.5	53	31.7	17	10.2	27	16.2	8	4.8
Job security	99	59.3	56	33.5	8	4.8	1	0.6	2	1.2
Exercise of own judgment	65	38.9	74	44.3	7	4.2	15	9.0	5	3.0
Salary	59	29.3	62	37.1	18	10.8	30	18.0	7	4.2
Interpersonal relations	71	42.5	73	43.7	10	6.0	8	4.8	3	1.8
Working conditions	79	47.3	73	43.7	6	3.6	6	3.6	2	1.2
Type of boss	78	46.7	64	38.3	4	2.4	13	7.8	7	4.2
Status	50	29.9	71	42.5	18	10.8	19	11.4	7	4.2

I have worked in industry, at a major university and for two law firms. The legal work is by far the most interesting and requires the most brain power. Unfortunately, lawyers in general regard the secretaries as "overhead" and are not willing to "share the wealth." There is a far greater difference in this field between what the boss makes and what the secretary makes. . . . I have been hampered in that I can only work part time and feel that I receive a very good salary for part time. However, when I must go full time, I will probably have to look elsewhere in order to obtain a higher salary. In other words, I will probably no longer be able to afford to do the work I enjoy.

Another graduate with the same number of years of experience who graduated in 1965 remarked:

I truly believe an administrative or executive secretary is in a responsible position. As a rule, she is grossly underpaid and underrated. I wish the word "secretary" could be eliminated from the language, because it seems to be synonymous, in most people's minds, with "brain the size of a raisin."

A positive note was struck by a 1966 graduate who aspired for a high-level secretarial position:

The executive secretarial major is ideal for women in large metropolitan areas where opportunities and salaries make your education worthwhile. A good secretarial position can be rewarding and lucrative. In my case, my husband now owns a business. I'm on the board of directors, etc., and feel my background has helped in our decision making. In our rural area secretaries are terribly underpaid.

A lack of challenge in her position was the cause of complaint by another graduate:

I feel that back in 1968 when I graduated and entered the job market employers were thrilled to hire a secretary with a degree. However, they didn't care to pay much more for that degree than they would for a secretary without a degree. After being hired I found that my responsibilities were perhaps slightly greater than a secretary with no degree but basically I was still "just a secretary" and the fact that I was a college graduate and had a large

number of management, etc., credits seemed to be forgotten among the piles of typing, dictation, and making coffee.

The comments of the more recent graduates tended to reflect more disillusionment with the manner in which their background was evaluated. A 1970 graduate who acquired ambitions for a managerial position early in her work history wrote:

I really believe you are doing women a disfavor by keeping the name of the major Office Administration. I feel it should be combined into the general business major. My brother graduated the same year as I did and got lots of job interviews in general business area where I got only an office girl position. His salary was higher. My grades were better. Later, I started putting business administration on my resume and got more interviews, better jobs and finally a promotion to a professional level--with the help of affirmative action! Today, I am going to law school and expect to graduate with honors.

A 1972 graduate who wanted a high-level secretarial position commented:

I think there is a great need for teaching students what the "real working world" is like. During my last two years in the major I kept hearing about how invaluable I was with all the knowledge and skills I was acquiring. However, when I got out of school and discovered what the business world felt I was worth salary-wise, compared to other college graduates, I was shocked! It would be nice to learn how a person looks for (and where to find) an administrative or office manager job. I've written letters asking for these types of opportunities only to be called in for a secretarial interview.

And another 1972 graduate added somewhat less heatedly:

I feel that secretarial skills are important and a real asset and it's not that I'm dissatisfied with my job as a secretary; however, I feel that a degree in Business Administration would less likely limit a female to being put in a secretarial job and left there. Prospective employers see your secretarial background and don't seem to consider your business administration core.

Summary. The third subproblem was concerned with the satisfaction of the office administration majors with the career rewards obtained from their job. Overall, 85.6 percent of the graduates expressed satisfaction with their work. When the graduates were asked to rate 12 specific career rewards, job security received the highest rating in terms of satisfaction and potential for advancement the lowest rating. While over half the graduates expressed various degrees of satisfaction with all the career rewards with the exception of potential for advancement, the rewards concerning job conditions were generally more satisfying than the rewards associated with the work itself and personal achievement.

#### Subproblem 4

What factors appear to contribute to the advancement of women into high-level secretarial or management positions, and what factors deter their advancement?

Advancement. A number of the studies reviewed in Chapter II sought to determine the factors which contributed to, or hindered, women's advancement. The data which was obtained from open-ended questions in the studies were the source of many of the factors which made up question 17 of the questionnaire, with the exception of items referring specifically to the office administration major or to secretarial skills.

As shown in Table 22, over 80 percent of the graduates indicated that work performance (82 percent) and personal qualities (80.8 percent) contributed a great deal to advancement. When the number who indicated

Table 22. Degree to Which Selected Factors Contribute to Advancement of Women (N=167)

Factor	Degree of Contribution								No Response	
	Much		Some		Little		None			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Knowledge of and experience on the job	126	75.4	27	16.2	5	3.0	1	0.6	8	4.8
Equal opportunity and civil rights legislation	36	21.6	68	40.7	38	22.8	12	7.2	13	7.8
Work performance	137	82.0	19	11.4	4	2.4	1	0.6	6	3.6
Secretarial skills	57	34.1	63	37.7	24	14.4	13	7.8	10	6.0
Personal qualities, such as dependability	135	80.8	25	15.0	2	1.2	0	0.0	5	3.0
Interest and enthusiasm for the work	121	72.5	40	24.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	5	3.0
Ability to get along with people	117	70.1	37	22.2	6	3.6	0	0.0	7	4.2
Luck	22	13.2	76	45.6	43	25.7	16	9.6	10	6.0
Career ambition	70	41.9	68	40.6	18	10.8	1	0.6	10	6.0
University degree in office administration	40	24.0	73	43.7	29	17.4	15	9.0	10	6.0
Length of employment with a firm	40	24.0	87	52.1	25	15.0	6	3.6	9	5.4
Assistance of a high-level executive	68	40.7	57	34.1	21	12.6	12	7.2	9	5.4
Other	11	7.0	1	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

some contribution are added to these percentages, they represent over 93 percent who believed that work performance and personal qualities had "some" or "much" influence on the advancement of women. Over 70 percent of the graduates indicated knowledge of and experience on the job (75.4 percent), interest and enthusiasm for the work (72.5 percent), and ability to get along with people (70.1 percent) as having much influence. These data agree substantially with the findings of Holley, Rusher, Hyde, and others. The five factors that received the highest responses indicating no contribution to advancement were: luck (9.6 percent), university degree in secretarial/office administration major (9.0 percent), secretarial skills (7.8 percent), equal opportunity and civil rights legislation (7.2 percent) and assistance of a high-level executive (7.2 percent).

Ten additional factors were listed in the "other" category:

- Who you know in a firm.
- Willingness to work more than 8 hours per day.
- Willingness to work twice as hard just to prove you can do the job.
- Continuing one's education after undergraduate school.
- Timing--being in the right place at the right time.
- Aggressiveness.
- Being a member of a family business.
- University degree in some business area.
- University degree (other than a secretarial major stipulated by three graduates).

Hennig and Jardim<sup>6</sup> found a consistent pattern in what women considered to be critical factors in obtaining advancement. Individual capacities, such as, hard work or outstanding performance, and behavioral factors, such as, acquiring self-confidence or aggressiveness

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

were cited over and over. Hennig and Jardim remarked that none of the women mentioned the organization environment. Neither did they talk of the need to win support of others, to get to know the political system, or to become visible. "None seemed to recognize that if one is not 'seen' by others as the kind of person who should have a particular job all the competence in the world would not get it for them."<sup>7</sup>

The responses indicating the degree to which factors hindered advancement were not as clear cut. As seen in Table 23, only one factor, unwillingness to assume responsibility (67.1 percent), was indicated by 50 percent of the graduates as having "much" deterrence to advancement. Over 30 percent listed stereotypes connected with secretarial work (36.5 percent), management's view of the capability of women (34.1 percent), and inability to relocate for promotion (33.5 percent). However, when the "some" and the "much" categories are considered together, they represent over 70 percent of the graduates. It may also be noted that over 50 percent said interrupted work history (53.5 percent) and family obligations (54.5 percent) hindered advancement somewhat.

Seventy-seven (46.1 percent) of the graduates said a university degree in secretarial/office administration was no hindrance. Too much competition for limited opportunities (8.4 percent), and pressure of the job (7.2 percent) received the next highest number of the "none" responses.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

Table 23. Degree to Which Selected Factors Hinder Advancement of Women (N = 167)

Factor	Degree of Contribution								No Response	
	Much		Some		Little		None			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Management's view of the capability of women	57	34.1	73	43.7	24	14.4	3	1.8	10	6.2
Interrupted work history	29	17.4	89	53.3	33	19.8	4	2.4	12	7.2
Inability to relocate for a promotion	56	33.5	66	39.5	25	15.0	7	4.2	13	7.8
Too much competition for limited opportunity	29	17.4	66	39.5	46	27.5	14	8.4	12	7.2
Unwillingness to assume responsibility	112	67.1	34	20.4	7	4.2	7	4.2	7	4.2
Family obligations	38	22.8	91	54.5	21	12.6	8	4.8	9	5.4
Lack of specialized education and training	52	31.1	79	47.3	19	11.4	8	4.8	9	5.4
Stereotypes connected with secretarial work	61	36.5	67	40.1	21	12.6	6	3.6	12	7.2
Pressure of the job	10	6.0	74	44.3	58	34.7	12	7.2	13	7.8
Personality defects, such as pettiness	45	26.9	67	40.1	36	21.6	10	6.0	9	5.4
University degree in office administration	9	5.4	18	10.8	52	31.1	77	46.1	11	6.6
Other	2	1.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	165	99.0



Two factors were mentioned in the "other" category:

- Subordinates' view of female bosses.
- Acceptance of limited advancement on the part of women.

Some of the graduates comments regarding the factors influencing advancement follow:

Despite the importance of the executive secretarial position, there are far too many preconceived ideas and stereotypes in the business world to allow people to advance, especially within the same company. I had to change companies in order to advance.

The major obstacle I have encountered is the use of the word secretarial in my major. Until full explanation is given, employers have often assumed all I'm interested in is a secretarial position.

When I was starting to work up the career ladder, there were very few women with college degrees in business so that when organizations started looking for women to fill higher positions in business, a college degree in any area was sufficient. In today's business world, I feel a degree in more specific business areas, such as accounting or finance, would be more beneficial.

I find now that my interests are centered in a different area, that of social work or psychology. If my interest in the secretarial field had been greater, I'm sure I would have gotten much more from the program. I would like there to have been a means of recognizing my lack of interest in the area of study I was enrolled.

Education for advancement. One of the factors associated with advancement in the studies reviewed in Chapter II was specialized education and/or training. As shown in Table 23, 52 (31.1 percent) of the graduates indicated that a lack of specialized education and training was a hindrance to advancement. The graduates were asked a separate question about the necessity for further education and/or training for advancement within their organization. In response, 34 (20.4 percent) of the graduates said they needed both education and training, 28

(16.8 percent) said training, and 16 (9.6 percent) said education. In all, 78 or 46.8 percent of the graduates replied that education and/or training was needed as shown in Table 24. In contrast, 44 (26 percent) of the respondents said that no further education or training was needed.

Table 24. Necessity for Further Education and/or Training for Advancement

Education/Training	Number	Percent
Further education	16	9.6
Training	28	16.8
Both education and training	34	20.4
No further education or training needed	44	26.3
No advancement opportunities	22	13.2
No desire for further education/training	6	3.6
No response	17	10.2
Total	167	100.1

In Table 25, a breakdown of the data according to the current employment status indicates that 41 (24.6 percent) of the full-time employed graduates perceived the need for added education or training compared to 29 (17.4 percent) unemployed graduates. Of the 17 who gave no response to this question, 10 were unemployed.

A 1972 graduate wrote the following comment about education:

When looking for a secretarial job, experience counts more than education. At MSU I was led to believe that as a secretary I could get a better job and more pay with a college degree. This is entirely false. As far as a secretarial position being a stepping-stone to a better position, I am just now becoming able to overcome the stereotyped "prejudice" executives have regarding secretaries.

Table 25. Necessity for Further Education and/or Training for Advancement by Current Employment Status

Responses	Full-Time Employed		Part-Time Employed		Unemployed		Total Graduates	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Further education	9	5.4	3	1.8	4	2.4	16	9.6
Training	19	11.4	1	0.6	8	4.8	28	16.8
Both education and training	13	7.8	4	2.4	17	10.2	34	20.4
No further education or training needed	23	13.7	4	2.4	17	10.2	44	26.3
No advancement opportunities	9	5.4	5	3.0	8	4.8	22	13.2
No desire for further education or training	1	0.6	0	0.0	5	3.0	6	3.6
No response	5	3.0	2	1.2	10	6.0	17	10.2
Total	79	47.3	19	11.4	69	41.4	167	100.1

A 1965 graduate with 10 years of experience expressed another opinion:

I feel a college degree helps one get into a management position or any type of white collar job--what the degree is in, at least at present for a woman, makes very little difference. I worked for a large corporation and feel my degree helped me get the initial start but equal opportunity pressure from the government was the only reason I advanced to the Assistant Buyer position.

A graduate who expressed satisfaction with her present employment wrote:

An advantage for a secretarial background is that it's easy to re-enter the job market after being absent for some time by brushing up on your skills at local schools or colleges. Advancement is easy if you desire it--if not in your present job, it can be obtained by getting a new job. A good secretary is in high demand.

When the graduates were asked how many had taken additional courses or training for advancement in an office or managerial position, 47 (28.1 percent) responded "yes" and 117 (70.1 percent) responded "no" (Table 26).

Table 26. Number of Graduates Who Have Taken Additional Courses or Training Beyond Their Baccalaureate Degree for Advancement

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	47	28.1
No	117	70.1
No response	3	1.8
Total	167	100.1

Table 27 shows the breakdown by employment status. Thirty (18 percent) of the full-time employed had taken additional courses or training for advancement in comparison to the 11 (6.6 percent)

Table 27. Current Employment Status of Graduates by Additional Courses or Training Beyond Baccalaureate Degree

Response	<u>Full-Time Employed</u>		<u>Part-Time Employed</u>		<u>Unemployed</u>		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Yes	30	18.0	6	3.6	11	6.6	47
No	48	28.8	12	7.2	57	34.1	117
No response	1	0.6	1	0.6	1	0.6	3
Total	79	47.4	19	11.4	69	41.3	167

unemployed graduates. And 48 (28.8 percent) of the full-time employed graduates had not taken additional courses or training in comparison to 57 (34.1 percent) of the unemployed graduates.

The graduates were asked to check the type of education and/or training they had beyond the baccalaureate level. Their responses are listed below. In a number of cases, more than one response was checked.

<u>Type of Education or Training</u>	<u>Number</u>
Higher degree (M.A., Ph.D.) . . . . .	4
University courses, credit . . . . .	13
University courses, non-credit . . . . .	6
Training programs . . . . .	21
Workshops, seminars, etc. . . . .	31
Banking courses . . . . .	2
CPS (Certified Professional Secretary) . . . . .	1
Refresher courses . . . . .	2
Total . . . . .	80

The question specifically asked for education and training to advance in office or management positions. Only four graduates checked "higher degree." However, 9 graduates in all commented that they had obtained a master's degree: 2 in business or office education, 1 in

elementary education, 5 in education, and 1 in business administration. As well, 5 were presently in school either full time or part time: 2 in law school, 1 in a MBA program, 1 in family studies, and 1 college-graduate-in-training. Two others had obtained teaching certification, 1 had passed her CPA examinations, and 1 had obtained a bachelor's degree in business education. Another had been accepted into law school for the fall of 1977.

A 1957 graduate who is presently working part time expressed the opinion:

I believe basically that my education at MSU has served me well. It took very little additional course work to up-date my knowledge--even after being out of school close to 20 years. I am, however, in the midst of a career change which accounts for some of my answers.

A 1964 graduate wrote another positive comment:

I feel that the secretarial/office administration major provides a good base on which to build once one knows what careers in the business field appeal to them. From that point I would get a MA in business management if I were to attempt to advance.

And a 1969 graduate wrote:

I have always been very proud of my degree from MSU. Although being a mother is my job now, I plan to reenter the job market in a few years. May I suggest that you keep offering the seminars on Women Reentering the Work Force. It's one of the hardest spots I think to be in--having rusty skills and being unsure of yourself.

Summary. The factors contributing to, or hindering, the advancement of women were the focus of interest in subproblem 4. Over 80 percent of the graduates said that work performance and personal qualities contributed the most to advancement. Knowledge

of and experience on the job, interest, and enthusiasm for the work, and ability to get along with people contributed a great deal also, according to more than 70 percent of the graduates. On the other hand, luck, the office administration degree, and secretarial skills received the lowest score as contributors to advancement. Among the factors hindering advancement, unwillingness to assume responsibility was given the highest rating, while the office administration degree was given the lowest rating.

Over 46 percent of the graduates said they would have to acquire further education, training, or both, if they wished to advance, while 26.3 percent said no further education or training was needed. Of the 167 graduates, 28.1 percent had taken additional courses or training beyond the baccalaureate level for advancement in an office or management position. Although a number of graduates had obtained a master's degree, it most often was obtained to enter the teaching profession.

#### Subproblem 5

How do graduates of the office administration major evaluate their secretarial specialization in terms of advancement to high-level positions?

Table 22 showed that 34.1 percent of the graduates felt that secretarial skills had much to do with their advancement and 37.7 percent said they contributed somewhat to advancement.

More specifically, the graduates were asked to indicate the degree of importance that each component in their program had in

preparing them for their current or last position held. As illustrated in Table 28, 71 (42.5 percent) of the respondents said that the secretarial core was "very important" and 51 (30.5 percent) said it was "important." Thus, 122 or 73 percent of the graduates rated the secretarial core as being very important or important in terms of preparation. A total of 119 or 71.2 percent of the graduates rated the business administration core as being "very important" or "important." These figures contrast with the 56.9 percent who rated the general education core as being "very important" or "important." It would appear that the secretarial core was rated slightly more important than the business administration core. When the graduates who rendered the "very important" and "important" ratings are partitioned according to the period of graduation in Table 29, however, differences in trends can be discerned. Whereas 44 (37.0 percent) of the graduates considered the business administration core to be relatively important prior to 1965, 75 (63.1 percent) gave it the same rating after 1965. In contrast, 55 (45 percent) of the graduates considered the secretarial core to be important before 1965 and 67 (54.9 percent) after 1965. Hence, while a greater number of graduates gave the ratings after 1965 (due, no doubt, in part by increased enrollments), the business administration core increased in importance to a much greater extent than the secretarial core in the opinion of the graduates. Likewise, when the data are partitioned according to the current employment status, it appears that the full-time employed graduates consistently considered their business administration core to be slightly more important than the secretarial core as seen in Table 30.



Table 28. Importance of Each Component of Degree Program in Terms of Preparation for Current or Last Position Held (N = 167)

Component	<u>Very</u> <u>Important</u>		<u>Important</u>		<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Important</u>		<u>Not</u> <u>Important</u>		<u>No</u> <u>Response</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Business Administration Core	69	41.3	50	29.9	35	21.0	12	7.2	1	0.6
Secretarial Core	71	42.5	51	30.5	26	15.6	17	10.2	2	1.2
General Education Core	30	18.0	65	38.9	52	31.1	15	9.0	5	3.0

Table 29. Importance of Each Component of Degree Program by Period of Graduation (N = 167)

Component	<u>1955-1959</u>		<u>1960-1964</u>		<u>1965-1969</u>		<u>1970-1975</u>		<u>Total</u> <u>Graduates</u>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Business Administration Core	15	12.6	29	24.4	44	37.0	31	26.1	119	71.2
Secretarial Core	22	18.0	33	27.0	40	32.8	27	22.1	122	73.0
General Education Core	15	15.8	25	26.3	33	34.7	22	23.2	95	57.0

Table 30. Importance of Each Component of Degree Program by Current Employment Status  
(N = 167)

Component	Very Important			Important			Somewhat Important			Not Important		
	F	P	U <sup>a</sup>	F	P	U	F	P	U	F	P	U
Business Administration Core	35	6	28	22	7	21	15	5	15	6	1	5
Secretarial Core	29	10	32	21	6	24	16	3	7	12	0	5
General Education Core	14	2	14	32	2	31	21	8	22	10	4	1

<sup>a</sup>F = full-time employed (N = 79); P = part-time employed (N = 19); and U = unemployed (N = 69).

A 1963 graduate with 11 to 15 years of employment experience made the following recommendation:

I would not recommend a person spend four years in college for a secretarial degree. Secretarial courses could be taken as part of a person's elective courses but I would recommend a person get their degree in accounting, general business, or management. Employers tend to look down on a person with a secretarial degree.

Two other graduates who had aspired for high-level secretarial positions wrote:

I feel my degree was important in obtaining my first secretarial job and in starting at a higher salary than I would have received otherwise. But, in general, in the three firms I worked for in five-and-a-half years of employment, a general education in liberal arts would have been just as valuable. Most of the other secretaries with whom I worked in all three firms had no more than high school educations or perhaps a secretarial school course. Our jobs and duties were basically the same, as were salaries.

The fact that I have a degree has certainly been an advantage in securing high-level secretarial positions. In some cases, it seems to limit you only to "secretarial-type" work. I wish I had gone into Business Administration and Business Education as a dual major--or perhaps accounting.

The graduates were asked: "Have you ever been overlooked for a managerial or executive position because of your secretarial background?" Table 31 shows that 94 (56.3 percent) of the graduates responded "no," while 13 (7.8 percent) responded "yes," and 55 (32.9 percent) said they did not know.

Finally, in connection with subproblem 5, the graduates were asked to indicate the amount of emphasis they would recommend for each component of the degree program. According to the data illustrated in

Table 31. Number of Graduates Who Have Been Overlooked for a Managerial or Executive Position Because of Their Secretarial Background

Response	Number	Percent
Yes	13	7.8
No	94	56.3
Don't know	55	32.9
No response	5	3.0
Total	167	100.1

Table 32, 124 (74.3 percent) of the graduates recommended that the same emphasis be given the secretarial core, and 108 (64.7 percent) recommended the same emphasis for the general education core. However, 99 (59.3 percent) of the graduates recommended a greater emphasis be given the business administration core.

Three of the graduates suggested on-the-job experiences.

This field would be greatly enhanced by several work/study terms. There is no replacement in the classroom for such experience.

I feel one term is essential to the program for on-the-job experience (like the student teaching program). So many girls hadn't even been in an office, let alone work in one prior to their graduation.

The problem that I am now faced with is needing skills or knowledge obtained from the business administration core (especially the accounting and computer science) and I have unfortunately not had these courses since 1969-70. . . . I feel that I now need refresher courses to be competent in these areas. Perhaps some on-the-job situations while in college, using these skills, would have reinforced the knowledge. It is most unfortunate that while accounting and management skills were fresh, employers in this area felt a woman could not possibly know more than how to type!

Table 32. Advice to Curriculum Designers Regarding Amount of Emphasis to Be Given Each Component of the Degree Program

Component	Emphasis						No Response	
	More		Same		Less			
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Business Administration Core	99	59.3	60	35.9	4	2.4	4	2.4
Secretarial Core	21	12.6	124	74.3	15	9.0	7	4.2
General Education Core	32	19.2	108	64.7	17	10.2	10	6.0

Summary. In subproblem 5, an attempt was made to discern how the graduates evaluated their secretarial specialization. They were asked to rate the importance of the business administration core, the secretarial core, and the general education core in preparing them for their current or last position held. Seventy-three percent of the graduates rated the secretarial core as being very important or important, and 71.2 percent rated the business administration core as being very important or important. When the data were broken down according to the period in which the respondents graduated, it appeared that the graduates previous to 1965 attributed greater importance to the secretarial core than the graduates after 1965. Also, the full-time employed graduates appeared to rate the business administration core more highly than the secretarial core. Only 7.8 percent of the graduates believed that they were ever overlooked for a managerial position because of their secretarial background. However, while 74.3 percent of the graduates recommended placing the same emphasis on the secretarial core, 59.3 percent recommended placing more emphasis on the business

administration core. The graduates appeared to be satisfied with the general education emphasis as it was.

#### Subproblem 6

How do the office administration majors evaluate their educational background in terms of their career and their opportunities for advancement?

Four questions were posed to the graduates in order to determine their evaluation of the office administration major. Table 33 summarizes the responses of the graduates to the four questions.

When asked if they would choose the office administration major to advance in a business career, 69 (41.3 percent) of the graduates said "probably no" and 21 (12.6 percent) said "definitely no." The negative responses accounted for 53.9 percent of all the graduates.

When asked if they would recommend the major to women who wished to advance in a high-level secretarial position, the response was more decisive. Of the 167 responses, 105 (62.9 percent) replied "definitely yes" and 49 (29.3 percent) said "probably yes." The responses were fairly evenly divided when the graduates were asked if they would recommend the major for advancement to a managerial position. Positive responses were exactly the same as for question 1, that is, 39.5 percent. Negative responses were 43.7 percent, which was less than question 1, because 27 (16.2 percent) of the graduates answered "don't know."

Table 33. Evaluation and Recommendation of Office Administration Major by Graduates (N = 167)

Questions to Graduates	Definitely Yes		Probably Yes		Don't Know		Probably No		Definitely No	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1. If you were starting college today and had ambitions to advance in a business career, would you choose the same major?	18	10.8	48	28.7	11	6.6	69	41.4	21	12.6
2. Would you recommend the major for women who wish to advance to high-level secretarial positions?	105	62.9	49	29.3	5	3.0	5	3.0	3	1.8
3. Would you recommend the major for women who wish to advance to managerial or executive positions?	18	10.8	48	28.7	27	16.2	53	31.7	20	12.0
4. If you had to do it over again, would you choose the same major?	21	12.6	42	25.1	17	10.2	57	34.2	30	18.0

Fifty-seven (34.1 percent) of the graduates said they probably would not choose the major if they had to do it over again; 42 (25.1 percent) said they probably would choose the major. In all, 52.1 percent gave a negative response, 37.7 percent a positive response, and 10.2 percent said they did not know.

Because of the somewhat ambiguous results of questions 1, 3, and 4 in Table 33, the frequencies were broken down according to the current employment status. In question 1, concerning the choice of the major to advance in a business career, over twice as many full-time graduates gave a negative response as a positive one, while the unemployed graduates gave slightly more positive responses than negative responses as shown in Table 34.

Table 34. Recommendation of Office Administration Major to Advance in a Business Career by Current Employment Status

Response	Full-Time Employed		Part-Time Employed		Unemployed		Total Graduates	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Definitely yes	4	2.4	5	3.0	9	5.4	18	10.8
Probably yes	18	10.7	3	1.8	27	16.2	48	28.7
Don't know	9	5.4	1	0.6	1	0.6	11	6.6
Probably no	38	22.8	8	4.8	23	13.8	69	41.4
Definitely no	10	6.0	2	1.2	9	5.4	21	12.6
Total	79	47.3	19	11.4	69	41.4	167	100.1



One of the full-time employed majors who graduated in 1967 made the following statement:

I wish I had been counseled in college and high school so that I could have prepared better for the opportunities that exist today. I was not encouraged--in fact, I believe I was discouraged--from pursuing a major which would better qualify me for what were then "male" jobs. I was fortunate to have very progressive management early in my career--they gave me an opportunity to perform other than in a secretarial capacity. Neither they nor I would hire someone with my educational background today for a management training program or anything other than a secretarial position.

In the question concerning recommendation of the major for advancement to managerial positions, Table 35 reveals that the full-time employed graduates again gave negative responses while the unemployed graduates gave positive responses. In this question, however, 13 unemployed graduates gave neutral responses.

Table 35. Recommendation of Office Administration Major for Advancement to a Managerial Position by Current Employment Status

Response	Full-Time Employed		Part-Time Employed		Unemployed		Total Graduates	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Definitely yes	5	3.0	5	3.0	8	4.8	18	10.8
Probably yes	24	14.3	2	1.2	22	13.2	48	28.7
Don't know	8	4.8	6	3.6	13	7.8	27	16.2
Probably no	28	16.8	6	3.6	19	11.4	53	31.7
Definitely no	14	8.4	0	0.0	6	3.6	20	12.0
Total	79	47.3	19	11.4	68 <sup>a</sup>	40.8	167	99.4

<sup>a</sup>One unemployed graduate did not respond.

Some of the opinions expressed by the graduates follow:

I am now office manager at a grocery wholesale co-op in Medford, Oregon. I got this job because of a college degree--I think I'm the only salaried employee who has one. I've always experienced that people are impressed with "degree." When you specify Executive Secretarial Administration, the attitude is, "Oh. A secretary." I would advise women to take office management and take the secretarial skills as electives. Anyone with designs on more than secretarial should not allow themselves to be stereotyped as "secretary." It's very difficult to break the bonds.

Companies are a lot more willing to think in terms of women in lower level managerial type jobs than 10 years ago. I think a secretarial start in business is an excellent way to start.

I think employment opportunity for women in business has drastically changed since I worked in the business field. In the early 1960s the only way you could get into business was with some secretarial skill. I, myself, interviewed at least 25 firms in the Detroit area for a managerial training program. All they would offer was a secretarial position.

In answer to the question concerning whether the graduates would choose the office administration major if they had to do it over again, the negative responses of the full-time employed graduates again doubled the positive responses; however, in this instance, the unemployed graduates had slightly more negative responses than positive responses and no neutral responses as shown in Table 36.

A graduate who is entering another profession wrote:

I worked full time or part time as a legal secretary while going to law school so my ambitions for promotion were geared to becoming an attorney (I graduate next year). Therefore, my comments on promotion reflect this. In a law firm, there is no (or almost no) possibility of advancement since the highest job is usually an office manager and seniority seems to be a main criterion and being a secretary is a disadvantage for such promotion. If I had it

Table 36. Choice of Office Administration Major if Graduates Had to Do It Over Again by Current Employment Status

Response	Full-Time Employed		Part-Time Employed		Unemployed		Total Graduates	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Definitely yes	5	3.0	4	2.4	12	7.2	21	12.6
Probably yes	18	10.7	4	2.4	20	12.0	42	25.1
Don't know	9	5.4	8	4.8	0	0.0	17	10.2
Probably no	29	17.4	3	1.8	25	15.0	57	34.2
Definitely no	18	10.8	0	0.0	12	7.2	30	18.0
Total	79	47.3	19	11.4	69	41.4	167	100.1

to do it over again, I would have gone into more general business and tried to get into management--there are more doors open for women all the time.

The breakdown of the data according to current employment status indicates that more of the full-time employed graduates tended to give negative responses to questions 1, 3, and 4 used in subproblem 6 than did the unemployed graduates. The part-time employed graduates did not show any sustained pattern. One may interpret these results to indicate that the unemployed graduates made a more optimistic assessment of the program because they were removed from actual working conditions and career problems; whereas the employed graduates, in the midst of the realities of the work world, made a more pessimistic assessment.

In the final question relating to subproblem 6, the graduates were asked how satisfied they were right now with having chosen the office administration major. The most frequent response was by 71 (43.5 percent) graduates who replied "satisfied" followed by 41

(24.6 percent) who said "very satisfied." Therefore, 67.1 percent of the graduates were satisfied or very satisfied with their choice. Although only 16.2 percent said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, 28 (16.8 percent) answered "uncertain" (Table 37).

Table 37. Present Satisfaction of Graduates with Choice of the Office Administration Major

Response	Number	Percent
Very satisfied	41	24.6
Satisfied	71	42.5
Uncertain	28	16.8
Dissatisfied	22	13.2
Very dissatisfied	5	3.0
Total	167	100.1

Interestingly enough, Table 38 shows that 17 of the 28 who answered "uncertain" were presently full-time employed. Otherwise, the responses of the graduates did not differ greatly between the three groups.

A 1969 graduate who has been employed since graduation wrote:

I enjoy the secretarial profession very much and feel that secretaries are an important part of the business world; however, the secretarial classification becomes a burden. . . . I have read about several women who have made it, and I can certainly understand what they have gone through to get there. It appears to me, however, that most of these women have specialized in a certain profession such as journalism, accounting, marketing, etc. I don't believe many have started as a secretary and worked their way to the top. . . . I certainly hope that the secretarial profession can establish a better position in the future. As much as I enjoy secretarial work, I'm afraid my recommendation to a woman interested in a career would be to consider anything other than secretarial work.

Table 38. Satisfaction with Major by Current Employment Status

Response	Full-Time Employed		Part-Time Employed		Unemployed		Total Graduates	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Very satisfied	17	10.2	5	3.0	19	11.4	41	24.6
Satisfied	31	18.5	8	4.8	32	19.2	71	42.5
Uncertain	17	10.2	3	1.8	8	4.8	28	16.8
Dissatisfied	11	6.6	3	1.8	8	4.8	22	13.2
Very dissatisfied	3	1.8	0	0.0	2	1.2	5	3.0
Total	79	47.3	19	11.4	69	41.4	167	100.1

On the other hand, some of the graduates expressed complete satisfaction with the office administration major.

Although I am no longer working now, I plan to return to work after my children are grown and feel the secretarial administration program was all I had hoped. It prepared me for the type of work I had hoped to obtain with lots of promise for future advancement.

I believe the office administration program really prepares the graduate for a position of respect in the business world. Upon graduation I got a job with Burroughs Corporation and published monthly reports on the world-wide organization. Because of my training and qualifications, I was able to take over the statistical part of my boss's responsibilities, allowing him to expand his responsibilities.

On the whole, however, the remarks of a 1955 graduate and a 1968 graduate summed up the feelings of many of the graduates:

My college education has been invaluable to me--the variety of work opportunities is tremendous! On the negative side, I find the word "secretary" still to be one not regarded with much respect--many think of a "secretary" as a glorified typist, and she's very low on the pay scale (note, also, the sex). It's a matter of terminology that needs to be clarified!

I don't mean to discredit the secretarial degree program; I think it was an excellent program. The problem is the attitude of employers and other people. I can't tell you how many times I've been asked, "Why did you go to college for four years to be a secretary?"

Summary. The final subproblem sought to determine the graduates' evaluation of the office administration major in terms of their career and their opportunities for advancement. The graduates were asked if they would choose the office administration major to fulfill ambitions for advancement in a business career. Of the 167 graduates, 53.9 percent responded "definitely no" or "probably no." However, when they were asked if they would recommend the office administration major for advancement to a high-level secretarial position, 62.9 percent replied "definitely yes." When asked if they would recommend the office administration major for advancement in a management position, 39.5 percent of the responses were positive and 43.7 percent negative, with 16.2 percent being neutral. When asked if they would choose the major had they to do it over again, 52.1 percent gave negative responses while 37.7 percent gave positive responses.

In general, however, the graduates were positive in response to a question concerning their present satisfaction with their choice of major: 24.6 percent said "very satisfied" and 42.5 percent said "satisfied." While only 16.2 percent indicated dissatisfaction, 16.8 percent said they were uncertain.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study are discussed in the final chapter.

The primary purpose of the study was to describe the graduate of the office administration major at Michigan State University in terms of the factors that influence her work life, and in demographic terms. A secondary purpose was to obtain data upon which to direct the future development of the office administration program and to base career advice.

Hence, the problem was to examine the office administration major in terms of the level of position attained by its graduates, the career aspirations and career rewards of the graduates, the obstacles to advancement, and the influence of a secretarial background on career advancement. Six subproblems, derived from the principal problem, delineated the specific direction of the study.

The population of the study was 220 female graduates who had obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Business Administration from Michigan State University between 1955 and 1975 inclusive. The descriptive-survey method, utilizing a five-page questionnaire, was the means by which data were collected. A return of 80.4 percent was realized.

### Summary of Findings

The findings were summarized in two main parts. In the first part, the demographic data and current employment status of the graduates were discussed. In the second part, the data pertaining to the six subproblems were analyzed.

Of the 220 graduates that comprised the sample, 176 usable returns provided the data for the study. The 21-year span of the study was divided into four periods from which the greatest response (36.9 percent) came from the graduates of the 1965-1969 period and the smallest response came from the graduates of the 1955-1959 period. Seventeen percent of the graduates were single, 77.8 percent were married, and the remaining 5.1 percent were widowed or divorced. The largest representation of graduates came from the 32-37 (38.1 percent) age group and the smallest came from the 44-49 (1.7 percent) age group. No graduates over 50 years of age were represented. The graduates had no dependents other than children. The largest frequency of response came from 36.9 percent of the graduates who had two children; the second largest was 34.7 percent who had no children. The current employment status of the respondents was 46.6 percent employed, 12.5 percent part-time employed, and 40.9 percent unemployed. Of the unemployed, 21 percent gave "housewife" as the reason for unemployment.

Nine of the 176 graduates had not been employed in an office or managerial occupation since their graduation. The two main reasons given by these graduates were marriage and family responsibilities and



education or training for other work. The nine graduates were eliminated from further analysis in the study.

Typically, the profile of the 167 graduates who had office-related employment experience varied according to their current employment status. If the graduate were full-time employed, she graduated between 1970-1975, was married, between 26 to 31 years of age, and had no children. If part-time employed, she graduated between 1955-1959, was married, between 38 and 43 years of age and had two children. And, if presently unemployed, she graduated between 1965-1969, was married, between 32 and 37 years of age and had two children.

In the second part, six subquestions specifically delineated the main problem of the study.

Subproblem 1:

Do graduates of the office administration program obtain high-level secretarial positions, middle management positions, and/or executive positions?

The executive secretary and the administrative assistant were classified as high-level secretarial positions. In all, 44.9 percent of the graduates had obtained high-level secretarial positions--15.6 percent as administrative assistants and 29.3 percent as executive secretaries. A total of 15.6 percent had attained the managerial level. Of these, 8.4 percent were office managers which is the lowest level in the management hierarchy.

In an attempt to acquire further insight into subproblem 1, the length of employment and the salary were ascertained. Ninety-eight (58.7 percent) of the graduates were employed from one to five years.

Only one graduate was employed over 20 years. A cross tabulation of the job titles and the length of employment revealed that the largest number of the graduates were employed as secretaries or executive secretaries for one to five years. Length of employment did not appear to be correlated with promotion to managerial positions for this sample of graduates. Forty percent of the 167 graduates earned over \$10,000. However, because 41.4 percent were presently unemployed, many of the salaries quoted could not be evaluated in terms of today's earnings. Of the 79 full-time employed graduates, 54 or 68.4 percent earned over \$10,000 and five earned over \$20,000.

Subproblem 2:

Do women with an office administration major aspire to obtain management or executive positions? If so, when do they develop these aspirations?

One hundred (59.8 percent) of the graduates appeared to have high aspirations with 34.1 percent choosing the program to obtain a high-level secretarial position and 25.7 percent as a "stepping stone" into management positions. The majority (62.3 percent) of the graduates said they would not relocate for a higher position. However, 34.7 percent of this group were presently unemployed. Of the 47 (28.1 percent) who said they would relocate, 38 (22.8 percent) were presently employed.

Subproblem 3:

Are graduates of the office administration major satisfied with the career rewards received from the positions they obtain?

The majority (85.6 percent) of the graduates indicated that they liked their work in varying degrees. The job factor in which the greatest number of graduates reported a "very satisfied" rating was job security (59.3 percent). Working conditions, the type of boss, and the nature of the work received the next highest ratings. Potential for advancement received the highest number of "uncertain," "dissatisfied," or "very dissatisfied" ratings (49.8 percent). It was followed by salary, challenge of the work, and opportunity for self-growth. Therefore, the graduates expressed more satisfaction with the conditions surrounding the job than with the job itself and personal achievement.

Subproblem 4:

What factors appear to contribute to the advancement of women into high-level secretarial or management positions, and what factors deter their advancement?

Over 90 percent of the graduates believed that work performance and personal qualities had either "much" or "some" influence on the advancement of women. These were followed by knowledge of and experience on the job, interest and enthusiasm for the work, and ability to get along with people. Luck, the secretarial/office administration major, secretarial skills, equal opportunity and civil rights legislation, and the assistance of a high-level executive were rated as having little or no influence on advancement.

The greatest deterrent to advancement was unwillingness to assume responsibility (67.1 percent). Stereotypes connected with secretarial work, management's view of the capability of women, and inability to relocate for promotion were given the next highest ratings. The secretarial/office administration major, too much competition for limited opportunities and pressure of the job were rated as being little or no hindrance to advancement.

A total of 46.8 percent of the graduates indicated that they needed further education, training, or both education and training in order to advance within their organization. Of this number, 24.6 percent were presently full-time employed. Forty-seven (28.1 percent) of the graduates had actually taken additional courses or training for advancement in an office or managerial position. Of this number, 30 (18 percent) were presently full-time employed. Nine graduates in all had obtained a master's degree but mostly to enter the teaching profession.

Subproblem 5:

How do graduates of the office administration major evaluate their secretarial specialization in terms of advancement to high-level positions?

In total, 71.8 percent of the graduates felt that their secretarial skills contributed to some degree to advancement--34.1 percent indicating "much" contribution and 37.7 percent "some" contribution. Over 70 percent of the graduates said their secretarial core and their business administration core were "very important" or "important" in preparing them for their current or last position held,

in contrast to 56.9 percent who gave equal importance to the general education core. The majors who graduated before 1965 appeared to give greater importance to the secretarial core than the majors who graduated after 1965. And the full-time employed graduates appeared to consider the business administration core more important than the secretarial core. The majority (56.3 percent) of the graduates did not believe that they had ever been overlooked for a managerial position because of their secretarial background. However, 32.9 percent replied that they did not know. Over 74 percent of the graduates recommended that the same emphasis be given the secretarial core and 64.7 percent recommended the same for the general education core. But 59.3 percent recommended a greater emphasis for the business administration core.

Subproblem 6:

How do the office administration majors evaluate their educational background in terms of their career and their opportunities for advancement?

Over 53 percent of the graduates said they would not choose the office administration major if they had ambitions to advance in a business career. Over 92 percent said they definitely or probably would recommend the major for those who wanted to advance in a high-level secretarial position, whereas only 39.5 percent recommended the major for advancement in a managerial position. Over 50 percent of the graduates said they definitely or probably would not choose the major if they had it to do over again. A breakdown of the data by current employment status revealed that the full-time employed graduates gave twice as many negative responses as positive responses to the questions

concerning choice of the major to advance in a business career or in a management position, while the unemployed graduates gave slightly more positive than negative responses. In the question about choice of the major if one had it to do over again, the full-time employed graduates gave twice as many negative responses as positive responses, and, in this case, the unemployed graduates gave slightly more negative than positive responses. Nonetheless, over 67 percent of the graduates said they were "very satisfied" or, at least, "satisfied" with their choice of the major.

### Conclusions

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

1. Over 45 percent of the graduates of the office administration program at Michigan State University obtain high-level secretarial positions; 15.6 percent obtain managerial positions.

2. A degree with an office administration major is a distinct advantage for women in obtaining a high-level secretarial position, and the graduates overwhelmingly recommend the program for women who aspire to high-level secretarial positions. However, many of the graduates express the opinion that once they are established in a secretarial role, it places limitations on the amount of salary it is possible to earn and on the opportunities for advancement into other than secretarial positions.

3. Relatively few of the office administration majors obtain middle-management positions. The managerial positions they obtain tend to be in a lower- or supervisory-level of management (8.4 percent). It would appear from the comments of the graduates that career ladders in the office administration or office management field are not clearly defined. Hence, they find it very difficult to locate the entry-level positions that would lead to the level of employment for which they were trained.

4. A disparity exists between the stated aspirations of the graduates and their actual job attainment. While few (15.6 percent) of the graduates obtained managerial positions, over 65 percent said they had ambitions to obtain a managerial or executive position. One cannot determine how serious or realistic these ambitions are.

5. The majority of the office administration graduates who acquire aspirations to move into management positions do so after graduation. Except for a few graduates who discovered within the first year of employment that they disliked secretarial work, most of the graduates who acquired ambitions to move beyond the secretarial level did so within the first five or six years of employment.

6. While the majority (67 percent) of the graduates express varying degrees of satisfaction with their choice of the major, the pervasive stereotypes associated with secretarial work appear to have a debilitating effect on the graduates judging from their comments. For some, it appears to demean the value of their degree in comparison with other degrees and to cause dissatisfaction with their choice of the major.

7. It would appear that the office administration major does not provide the best entrance into the business world today for women who aspire to move beyond the secretarial level into managerial positions. Active recruitment of women by schools of business and by business organizations, largely caused by legislation prohibiting sex discrimination, has coincided with a new consciousness within women themselves of ambitions and potentialities that were not readily attainable twenty years ago. Hence, while the major has been a "stepping stone" by which women in the past have entered middle- and upper-management levels, it is no longer the best, nor indeed, the recommended route in the 70s.

8. Apparently over half of the graduates of the office administration major remain employed for only one to five years in secretarial or managerial positions after graduation. From the comments of a number of the currently unemployed graduates and from the fact that two-thirds of the 1955 to 1959 graduates were either full-time or part-time employed, it would appear that many will return to full-time employment after their family responsibilities lessen.

9. There are some indications that the majors who graduated after 1965 appear to give greater value to their business administration background than to their secretarial background, to express much greater disillusionment with the stereotypes of the secretarial field, and to advise women against choosing the office administration major.

10. Whether the graduates are currently employed or unemployed appears to make a distinct difference in their evaluation of their



educational background, their assessment of employment opportunities, and their satisfaction with career rewards.

### Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is recommended that women who enter the office administration program be screened carefully in order to determine their career aspirations. Both the Goodrich study and this study appear to confirm the fact that graduates have inflated expectations of the office administration major which leads to disappointment in their employment life.

2. Since women continue to enter sex-typed female programs, in-depth career counseling should be made available to them both at the secondary and post-secondary level. Women have not been accustomed to thinking in terms of a career--of having to support themselves all their lives. There is an urgent need in today's society for women to consider their career options. As more and more women are forced in today's world to add their earning power to that of their husbands, or, with the present divorce rate, to support themselves and their dependents in order to survive, they cannot afford to enter programs that lead to lower level, dead-end jobs, or to wait until their thirties to commit themselves to a career.

3. It is recommended that an ongoing program be established within office administration or similar departments to monitor the office administration field in order to determine current trends and

career options. While career counseling of a general nature may be obtained from a number of sources, continuous counseling of a more specific and precise nature should be provided by the department while the student is in the program. As well, students should be encouraged, and aided where possible, to obtain part-time and/or summer employment in their major field to familiarize themselves with the nature of the work and with career ladders. Successive counseling sessions over a three- or four-year period should enable the students to articulate and to clarify more precisely their aspirations, to obtain a clearer perspective of career opportunities within the field and to arrive at a career decision based upon a realistic analysis of themselves and the vocation of their choice.

4. Furthermore, it is recommended that Schools of Business consider and experiment with the feasibility of a two-track program: a secretarial administration major that prepares women for high-level secretarial support functions and an office administration, office management, or administrative management major that prepares women for management of administrative services or for lower- or middle-management positions. While these majors would have much in common, the latter would not include the secretarial skills of typewriting and shorthand, except as the student elected to take them.

5. Generally speaking, very little research has been done of women in the office administration, office management, or related areas. Several types of research should be conducted: follow-up research of female graduates of the office administration program from a number of

universities throughout the country, or from a number of geographical locations, all of whom have worked continuously for relatively the same number of years to determine typical career patterns; follow-up research of male and female graduates of the major to compare career patterns; and research of the position as held by men and women regardless of educational background in order to define more clearly the field of office administration.

6. Finally, further surveys of the business sector need to be made to determine the career options and the career ladders available to graduates with an office administration, office management, or related type of major.

## APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX A**

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

**FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE FOR  
SECRETARIAL/OFFICE ADMINISTRATION MAJORS**

**GENERAL DIRECTIONS:** Please complete all sections that apply to you by placing a check in the appropriate block, or a brief answer in "other."

## EVALUATION

1. If you were starting college today and had ambitions to advance in a business career, would you choose the same major? Check one answer.

☐ Definitely yes    ☐ Probably yes    ☐ Don't know    ☐ Probably no    ☐ Definitely no

If no: Check the major that you would choose.

<input type="checkbox"/> Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Business Education
<input type="checkbox"/> General Business	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

2. Would you recommend the office administration major for women who wish to advance:

- A. To high-level secretarial positions?

[ ] Definitely [ ] Probably [ ] Don't [ ] Probably [ ] Definitely  
yes yes know no no

- B. To managerial or executive positions?**

[ ] Definitely [ ] Probably [ ] Don't [ ] Probably [ ] Definitely  
yes yes know no no

3. Why did you choose the secretarial/office administration major? Check one.

[ ] Because secretarial skills insure steady employment  
[ ] Because of the influence of my family  
[ ] As a means to obtain a high-level secretarial position  
[ ] As a "stepping stone" into a management position  
[ ] Because I liked the secretarial courses I took in high school  
[ ] Other

4. How satisfied are you right now with having chosen the secretarial/office administration major? Check one.

[ ] Very [ ] Satisfied [ ] Uncertain [ ] Dissatisfied [ ] Very  
satisfied dissatisfied

5. If you had to do it over again, would you choose the same major?

☐ Definitely yes    ☐ Probably yes    ☐ Don't know    ☐ Probably no    ☐ Definitely no

6. Would you advise curriculum designers to give more, the same, or less emphasis to each component of the degree program:

	<u>More</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Less</u>
Business administration core	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Secretarial core	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
General education core	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

7. Year of graduation: ☐ 1955-1959      ☐ 1965-1969  
    ☐ 1960-1964      ☐ 1970-1975
8. Marital status: ☐ Single      ☐ Divorced  
    ☐ Married      ☐ Widowed
9. Age: ☐ 25 or under      ☐ 38-43  
    ☐ 26-31      ☐ 44-49  
    ☐ 32-37      ☐ 50 or over
10. Dependents (specify number): \_\_\_\_Children      \_\_\_\_Other

#### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

11. Are you currently employed, unemployed, or unavailable for employment?
- ☐ Employed full time  
☐ Employed part time  
☐ Unemployed but seeking employment  
☐ Unavailable for employment (Check appropriate reasons why you are unavailable for employment.)
- ☐ Housewife      ☐ Not interested in employment  
☐ Pregnancy      ☐ Ill health  
☐ Attending school      ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

If you have been employed at any time since your graduation in an office or management occupation, please go on to question 13. If you have not been employed in this type of position, please answer question 12 and return the questionnaire in the stamped, addressed envelope.

12. Why have you not been employed in an office or managerial occupation since graduation? Check one.
- ☐ Marriage/family obligations      ☐ Salary too low  
☐ Prefer other work      ☐ Jobs not available  
☐ Educated/trained for other work      ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## JOB INFORMATION

13. Job titles vary greatly among organizations. Check the general job title which comes closest to describing your current position or last position held.
- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Administrative Assistant</u> : aids executive in a staff capacity in the coordination of services and analysis and interpretation of policy. | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Office Manager</u> : directs office staff to obtain operational goals in a supervisory capacity.                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Executive Secretary</u> : performs secretarial and administrative duties for top-level personnel.  | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Department Head/Division Manager</u> : executes policies, implements decisions, and performs day-to-day management of a unit. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Secretary</u> : carries out general office and some administrative duties for middle management.   | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Executive</u> : responsible for major functions and policy-making decisions.  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____   |   |
14. How many years of office and/or managerial employment have you had altogether?
- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> under 1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 - 15 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 - 5 years  | <input type="checkbox"/> 16 - 20 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 - 10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> over 20 years |
15. In general, how do you feel about the work you do?
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Like it very much            | <input type="checkbox"/> Dislike it somewhat  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Like it somewhat             | <input type="checkbox"/> Dislike it very much |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Neither like nor dislike it. |   |
16. Considering the characteristics of your current position or last position held, indicate whether you are very satisfied (VS), satisfied (S), uncertain (U), dissatisfied (D), or very dissatisfied (VD) with each item:
- |                                  | <u>(VS)</u>              | <u>(S)</u>               | <u>(U)</u>               | <u>(D)</u>               | <u>(VD)</u>              |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Nature of the work.....          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Variety in the work.....         | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Opportunity for self-growth..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Potential for advancement.....   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Challenge of the work.....       | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Job security.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Exercise of own judgment.....    | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Salary.....                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Interpersonal relations.....     | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Working conditions.....          | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Type of boss.....                | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Status.....                      | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |



## ADVANCEMENT

17. Women have indicated numerous factors that contributed to their advancement, or that hindered it.

- A. In your opinion, how much do the following factors contribute to advancement?

	<u>Much</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Little</u>	<u>None</u>
Knowledge of and experience in the job.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Equal opportunity and civil rights legislation.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Work performance.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Secretarial skills.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Personal qualities, such as, dependability.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Interest and enthusiasm for the work.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Ability to get along with people.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Luck.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Career ambition.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
University degree in secretarial/office adm....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Length of employment with a firm.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Assistance of a high-level executive.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Other _____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

- B. In your opinion, how much do the following factors hinder advancement?

Management's view of the capability of women...	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Interrupted work history.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Inability to relocate for a promotion.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Too much competition for limited opportunities.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Unwillingness to assume responsibility.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Family obligations.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Lack of specialized training and education....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Stereotypes connected with secretarial work....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Pressure of the job.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Personality defects, such as, pettiness.....	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
University degree with secretarial/office major	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Other _____	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

18. How important were each of the three components of your degree program in terms of preparing you for your current position or last position held?

	<u>Very</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Important</u>	<u>Somewhat</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Not</u> <u>Important</u>
Business administration core	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Secretarial core	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
General education core	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

19. In order to advance within your organization, is it necessary for you to obtain further education and/or on-the-job training? Check one.

[ ] Further education	[ ] No further education or training needed
[ ] Training	[ ] No advancement opportunities
[ ] Both education and training	[ ] No desire for further education/training

20. Have you already taken additional courses or training beyond your BA degree for advancement in an office or management occupation?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

If yes: Check as many answers as are appropriate:

<input type="checkbox"/> Higher degree (MA, PhD)	<input type="checkbox"/> Training programs
<input type="checkbox"/> University courses, credit	<input type="checkbox"/> Workshops, seminars
<input type="checkbox"/> University courses, non-credit	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

21. If you have ambitions for a managerial or executive position, when did you acquire them? Check one.

<input type="checkbox"/> Before going to university	<input type="checkbox"/> After working for 5 years
<input type="checkbox"/> While at university	<input type="checkbox"/> I am happy where I am
<input type="checkbox"/> Early in my employment history	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

22. If you were offered a higher position which required relocation, would you accept it?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

If no: Why not? \_\_\_\_\_ (specify)

23. Have you ever been overlooked for a managerial or executive position because of your secretarial background?

☐ Yes    ☐ No    ☐ I don't know

24. What is the salary range per year of your most recent office position?

<input type="checkbox"/> Under \$4,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 - \$14,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 - \$7,499	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000 - \$19,999
<input type="checkbox"/> \$7,500 - \$9,999	<input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 or over

25. Do you wish to obtain a summary of the findings?

☐ Yes    ☐ No

Please add any comments that you would like to make.

**APPENDIX B**

**COVER LETTER**

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM  
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

April 15, 1977

Dear Graduate:

This letter is an urgent invitation for you to participate in a follow up of all the secretarial/office administration graduates of Michigan State University from 1955-1975. Just a few minutes of your time will provide data that may help many young women in the future in their preparation for the work world.

The purpose is to obtain information upon which to assess the office administration major in the light of today's demands. Dr. Mary V. Moore, Dr. Helen Green, and Mr. John Kraeer, whom many of you will remember, have enthusiastically endorsed this project.

Only you can tell us what the work pattern and the employment opportunities are for women with a secretarial/office administration background. A reply from every graduate is important--including those who have not sought employment and those who have entered other occupational fields. Your answers will remain strictly confidential.

Please answer the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the stamped, addressed envelope. A return by April 30 would be very much appreciated.

If you would like a summary of the findings, just mark the appropriate place on the last page of the questionnaire.

Yours very truly,



Virginia Sullivan  
Project Director

**APPENDIX C**

**FOLLOW-UP LETTERS**

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM  
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

May 6, 1977

Dear Graduate:

Several weeks ago, a questionnaire was sent to you as part of a twenty-year follow up of secretarial/office administration majors of Michigan State University. An integral part of the project is your response.

The degree program has largely attracted women. Hence, the purpose of this project is to assess the major in the light of the changes that have occurred in the life style, the employment opportunities, and the viewpoints of women during the last twenty years.

The meaningfulness of the survey depends greatly upon hearing from all 220 graduates--those who have not sought employment, those who have entered occupational fields not related to their college training, as well as those who have been employed in their major area.

Won't you please take 15 minutes of your time to answer the questionnaire? Without your cooperation, the follow up will not be complete.

Your views will be kept in strict confidence. And you may receive a summary of the results, if you wish.

An addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed for your convenience. A reply by May 20 would be most appreciated.

Yours very truly,



Virginia Sullivan  
Project Director

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM  
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

May 22, 1977

Dear Graduate:

During the last six weeks, two questionnaires have been sent to you as part of a follow-up of all secretarial/office administration graduates of Michigan State University.

While it is difficult to maintain an up-to-date address list of women graduates in our mobile society, a strenuous effort has been made to contact as many of you as possible. Since the deadline for receiving the questionnaires is approaching, this letter is a final attempt to obtain your input.

The questionnaire can be answered in 15 minutes. Even if you are not presently employed in an office occupation, or are not employed at all, your opinions are valuable for the completeness of the follow-up.

Please send your reply by June 6 in the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope. It will be very much appreciated. If it is more convenient to telephone your answers, please call collect at (517) 353-3689 after 7:00 p.m.

Yours very truly,



Virginia Sullivan  
Project Director

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM  
ERICKSON HALL

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824

August 12, 1977

Dear Graduate:

Some time ago, a questionnaire was sent to you inviting you to participate in a follow-up of the secretarial/office administration majors who graduated between 1955 and 1975.

While it has been impossible to trace all the graduates, a vigorous attempt has been made to locate as many as possible.

The 60's and 70's have been years of transition for women in many respects--perhaps nowhere moreso than in the work world. It is imperative that educators receive the information needed to counsel young women today and to provide direction for the office administration program of the future. This information can be derived most concretely from the experience of the graduates of the program.

Whether you are presently employed in an office occupation or not, or whether you are employed at all, please take 15 minutes to answer the questionnaire.

A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenience. A reply by September 3 would be most appreciated.

Yours very truly,

*Virginia Sullivan*

Virginia Sullivan  
Project Director



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