OFFICE MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES MODEL BASED ON INDUSTRIAL PERSPECTIVES

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Purpose: this paper's purpose is to explore competencies that should be acquired by graduates according to industries that they will work for. This study also proposes a model for competencies for office management aspect in industries and the categorization of these competencies and activities based on not only the education background but also the management level in an organization. **Theoretical framework:** The literature used in this study consists of many sources. However, we emphasize on the work description that is required in office management (Hollis-Turner; 2015 and Maynard; 1967). **Design/methodology/approach:** We gathered several cross-sectional articles on office competencies, and we also collected primary data through interviews with three experienced professionals in offices. We use critical systems heuristics to structure the answers, as well as construct the model of office competencies. **Findings:** The results of this research are two folds. First, the exploration of office management field competencies has several discrepancies between industrial perspectives and what are taught at the university or school, including soft skill competencies that should be given when graduates were still in school or university. Second result is the model is constructed that has significant contribution for the academic and industrial aspects. **Research, Practical & Social implications:** We would suggest that academic world would learn and adapt from the model constructed to avoid future misconception on office competencies. In the future, more office research will enrich the resources to determine the curriculum especially in office management. **Originality/value:** The result of this study emphasizes that while office can be changed into virtual offices, the competencies to run an office are still needed. Hence, this study shows the perspective from industries in Indonesia that can be used for curriculum redesign in universities and schools. Doi: https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i8.3099

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Intern. Journal of Profess. Bus. Review. |Miami, v. 8 | n. 8 | p. 01-12 | e03099 | 2023.

1

MODELO DE COMPETÊNCIAS DE GERENCIAMENTO DE ESCRITÓRIO COM BASE EM PERSPECTIVAS INDUSTRIAIS

RESUMO

Objetivo: o objetivo deste artigo é explorar competências que devem ser adquiridas por graduados de acordo com os setores para os quais trabalharão. Este estudo também propõe um modelo de competências para o aspecto de gestão de escritórios em indústrias e a categorização dessas competências e atividades com base não apenas no nível de formação, mas também no nível de gestão em uma organização.

Estrutura teórica: A literatura utilizada neste estudo consiste em muitas fontes. No entanto, enfatizamos a descrição de trabalho que é necessária na gestão do escritório (Hollis-Turner; 2015 e Maynard; 1967).

Projeto/metodologia/abordagem: reunimos vários artigos transversais sobre as competências do escritório e também coletamos dados primários por meio de entrevistas com três profissionais experientes nos escritórios. Usamos a heurística de sistemas críticos para estruturar as respostas, bem como construir o modelo de competências de escritório.

Constatações: Os resultados desta pesquisa são duas vezes. Em primeiro lugar, a exploração de competências de campo de gestão de escritório tem várias discrepâncias entre as perspectivas industriais e o que é ensinado na universidade ou escola, incluindo competências de soft skill que devem ser dadas quando os graduados ainda estavam na escola ou universidade. Segundo resultado é construído o modelo que tem contribuição significativa para os aspectos acadêmicos e industriais.

Investigação, implicações práticas e sociais: Sugerimos que o mundo acadêmico aprenda e se adapte a partir do modelo construído para evitar futuros equívocos sobre as competências dos escritórios. No futuro, mais pesquisa no escritório enriquecerá os recursos para determinar o currículo, especialmente na administração do escritório.

Originalidade/valor: o resultado deste estudo enfatiza que, embora o escritório possa ser transformado em escritórios virtuais, as competências para administrar um escritório ainda são necessárias. Assim, este estudo mostra a perspectiva das indústrias na Indonésia que pode ser usada para a reformulação do currículo em universidades e escolas.

Palavras-chave: Gerenciamento de Escritório, Competências, Indústria Indonésia.

MODELO DE COMPETENCIAS DE GESTIÓN DE OFICINA BASADO EN PERSPECTIVAS INDUSTRIALES

RESUMEN

Finalidad: El propósito de este trabajo es explorar las competencias que deben adquirir los egresados según las industrias para las que trabajarán. Este estudio también propone un modelo de competencias para el aspecto de gestión de oficinas en industrias y la categorización de estas competencias y actividades basado no solo en la formación, sino también en el nivel de gestión en una organización.

Marco teórico: La literatura utilizada en este estudio consta de muchas fuentes. Sin embargo, enfatizamos en la descripción del trabajo que se requiere en la gestión de oficinas (Hollis-Turner; 2015 y Maynard; 1967).

Diseño/metodología/enfoque: Se recopilaron varios artículos transversales sobre competencias de oficina, y también se recopilaron datos primarios a través de entrevistas con tres profesionales experimentados en oficinas. Utilizamos heurísticas de sistemas críticos para estructurar las respuestas, así como construir el modelo de competencias de la oficina.

Hallazgos: Los resultados de esta investigación son dos. En primer lugar, la exploración de las competencias de campo de la gestión de oficinas tiene varias discrepancias entre las perspectivas industriales y lo que se enseña en la universidad o la escuela, incluidas las competencias de habilidades blandas que se deben dar cuando los graduados todavía estaban en la escuela o la universidad. El segundo resultado es que se construye el modelo que tiene un aporte significativo para los aspectos académicos e industriales.

Implicaciones investigativas, prácticas y sociales: sugerimos que el mundo académico aprenda y se adapte a partir del modelo construido para evitar futuros malentendidos sobre las competencias de la oficina. En el futuro, una mayor investigación en la oficina enriquecerá los recursos para determinar el plan de estudios, especialmente en la gestión de la oficina.

Originalidad/valor: El resultado de este estudio enfatiza que mientras la oficina puede ser cambiada a oficinas virtuales, las competencias para dirigir una oficina siguen siendo necesarias. Por lo tanto, este estudio muestra la perspectiva desde las industrias en Indonesia que pueden ser utilizadas para el rediseño curricular en universidades y escuelas.

Palabras clave: Gestión de Oficinas, Competencias, Industria Indonesia.

Intern. Journal of Profess. Bus. Review. | Miami, v. 8 | n. 8 | p. 01-12 | e03099 | 2023.

2

INTRODUCTION

Advancing technology that has occurred for several years back, including the industrial revolution 4.0. This condition has disrupted all aspects, including the labour circumstances in industries. Even though Indonesia is still considered a developing country, the effects of these advancements will come sooner or later. Meanwhile, companies are excited to welcome changes in technology that could be used for efficiency. Some works that used to be done by humans are now replaceable by machines, and it may generate efficiency for industry (Bührer & Hagist, 2016; Bogner et al., 2016), However, they can become a disadvantage for workers. Organizations may want to transform their internal process from manual labor to automation of work; when this occurs, office management field is one of the fields whose labour will be heavily affected by these changes.

While office automation has been discussed from around 1980s (Gregory and Nussbaum, 1982; Curley, 1984; Hirschheim, 1986), the advancement of technology has never been faster. Hence, the organizational transformation, especially in the context of office management, will change sooner. The unprepared school and universities that has office management program to face this issue is also alarming an in need for immediate changes in the program. Educational organizations are not the only ones that need to prepare for any kind of changes in the curriculum structure in their program, industries also need to prepare for any changes in demand for office management graduates. With this reason, industries need to understand what changes and to communicate with the school/ universities that have office management studies.

With very little information on competencies in office management, there is na urgency of constructing the competencies required by the industry for the graduates. Hence, this paper's objectives are two folds. First, is to explore the competencies that industries required for office management graduates to work there. Second, is to create a model for office management competencies based on the career path and educational background. The study is conducted in Indonesia due to many study programs related to office management or administration and the somehow similar curriculum provided by these study programs.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Office is still a large part of an organization because it is a place for all activities that are related to the organization and how organization can achieve their goals (Maynard, 1967). Meanwhile, office management's application in every types of organizations is different. For

Intern. Journal of Profess. Bus. Review. | Miami, v. 8 | n. 8 | p. 01-12 | e03099 | 2023.

3

example, there are many researches that published the office management in clinic with specific purposes (see Weiner, 2007; Trowbridge and Silver, 1990; Nam, 2014).

Automation in an organization that is related to office work includes communication, text processing, and personal application, which leads to the changes in how people would communicate and the nature of the work in organization itself (Olson and Lucas, 1982). While some organizations can work through automation process, some failed (Chopra and Gauri, 2015).

In this particular study, we refer office management as a field that mainly handles all administrative work. This includes record management, data entry, and other administrative works. Office management is sometimes referred as office and technology management. The competencies such as electronic processing capabilities is also significant and usually, they were taught when they were students (Chukwukelu and Ile, 2019). According to Oberländer et al. (2019), digital competencies in the workplace is in high demand, in which there are two competencies, basic digital competencies and specific digital competencies. Basic digital competencies requires general ability to finish daily work, while specific digital competencies requires certain capabilities in particular work or position. In addition, record management competency, especially e-recording, is also highly essential in this day and age (Ovbiagele & Mgbonyebi, 2019). Certainly, this also includes handling documents, correspondence, and others (Oduma & Ile, 2012) Meanwhile, According to Hollis-Turner (2015), the curriculum of office management is mainly focusing on technical aspects, and linguistic capability is also being emphasized.

Other capabilities that should be included are general competencies. For example, leadership. A good sense of leadership could lead to a great company's performance, as stated by Onoriode and Samuel (2023) and Challa and Perwez (2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative approach by having interviews and library research as data collection methods. Three industrial experts were being interviewed in order to analyze the industry's views on office management area in their organization. After interviews were conducted, the records were translated into verbatim and then analyzed using thematic analysis. There are two main themes generated from the analysis.

Intern. Journal of Profess. Bus. Review. | Miami, v. 8 | n. 8 | p. 01-12 | e03099 | 2023.

4

Table 1. Interview respondents

Name (initials)	Working experience	Industry
SI	> 10 years	Consulting
AJ	> 5 years	Pharmacy
RS	7 years	Finance & banking

Source: authors' data

To build the model, we constructed it with the basic principal of critical system heuristics by Ulrich (2005). With this method, there was already several questions that could assist into building the model. Library research was conducted as supporting methods to give context to the model. Hence, the model created is expected to reflect the real condition of office management competencies in organizations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problems Arise in Office Management Aspects in the Industries

There are several problems that occur in office management field in the industry. First, so far, the field of management or office administration is often equated with the field of secretarial science. Although closely intertwined, office management has its own expertise that is different from secretarial work. According to RS, when listening to office administration, the closest association is the secretary.

> "From my own understanding, yes, when you hear office administration, the first thing that comes to mind is a secretary. What a secretary does is like that, right? More to... like filling out letters, correspondence too, something like that, right? And what.. indeed.. as far as I know, that's the case, it's as if it's like a secretary" (RS)

Therefore, a distinction is needed between office management graduates and other fields. The competence of MP graduates with secretaries is the same when compared to those in the industry. Moreover, MP is only limited as a data input operator, not as a position that has the authority to make decisions within an organization. In dealing with technological developments, the field of office management is felt to have experienced a transition. Office management graduates currently work only as "robots" whose job is to input and carry out other administrative work in accordance with the company's Standard Operating Procedures.

> "Nowadays, there are still a lot of people's perceptions attached to it, it's as if the routine task is that you know… What that means is still strong, sir. When we talk about office administration, those are routine tasks that seem to have been given from the company earlier." (SI)

Intern. Journal of Profess. Bus. Review. | Miami, v. 8 | n. 8 | p. 01-12 | e03099 | 2023.

5

Thus, if the current conditions are prolonged, the competencies of office management graduates will no longer be relevant because they may be replaced through automation. Meanwhile, ideally office management graduates must be able to produce innovations to existing systems in the organization so that the organization can run effectively and efficiently.

> "Whereas the OTKP-Office Automation & Management people, those people are expected to design systems, change systems, innovate existing systems. Well, things like that never show up. It doesn't appear that often." (SI)

Due to the perception that often occurs in the industry, the career development of MP graduates is not progressing because they are only considered as operators or technical workers in divisions or organizations. Meanwhile, according to RS, the term office manager at the company where he works refers to providing the infrastructure in the office. This is a difference between one company and another.

> "Our Office Manager is more like... one person, really. The one in charge is the Office Manager but he takes care of infrastructure matters. That's it, so for example it's like a pantry, then all of the pantry's equipment runs out, then it runs out for example if there's a damage in the office.. he's the one who takes care of everything." (RS)

Graduate Competencies

In South Africa, according to research by Khubeka (2017), Office Management (and technology) graduates are recruited to occupy office administration positions, senior secretaries, and assistant managers. In Indonesia, the highest structural position that Office Management graduates can enter is the Chief Secretary.

> "Structurally at the security guard, ma'am. Structural in secper. Below the PP level, that's still talking about the head of the bureau, the head of the office. This branch office, here it is. If he is all in." (SI)

In other companies, the highest career path for Office Management graduates is to become a manager. As an addition, a promotion can be in the form of a transfer to a branch office with a higher position than before. This can apply with the record that the department to be occupied in the new place is the same or linear with the department from which the graduate moved.

According to one respondent, AJ, an office management graduate was placed on staff. The staff in question can be in their respective parts of the organization including administration, purchasing, data processing, and HRD. However, what needs to be underlined is the position of graduates primarily as administrative staff. The reason why graduates are

Intern. Journal of Profess. Bus. Review. | Miami, v. 8 | n. 8 | p. 01-12 | e03099 | 2023.

6

placed mainly as administrative staff is because they already have previous skills in the administrative field, for example archiving and management in general.

> "Because the office management usually already knows the first general administrative data processing... The second is they are experts in archival management, it's usually like that sir…. What follows is that they can also manage their finances in general, in general, yes" (AJ)

In the recruitment process at AJ's company, HRD has an important role in determining the competencies and abilities possessed by a position, after which HRD will inform the user and assess whether the candidate is suitable to be placed under that user.

The ability to multitask is also expected to be possessed by Office Management graduates. This indicates the need for the ability to do several jobs at the same time (Judd, 2014; Peterson, 2014; Rosen et al., 2013). However, Peterson (2014) added that although graduates need multitasking skills, planning and time management skills are equally important and must be possessed.

Other research says that the ability to multitask is not useful in some conditions that require the ability to learn high-level concepts (Jeong and Hwang, 2016). This indicates that if the work is technical and routine, multitasking skills will be very useful as long as it is accompanied by the ability to manage time. However, when work requires graduates to think conceptually, multitasking skills are not very useful. So, the next argument is whether all Office Management graduates are required to have these abilities or do they have further scope of work than just technical and practical skills.

Thus, the competence of Office Management graduates is not only limited by a single ability administratively, but there is a combination of administrative tasks with understanding in office system/organizational innovation.

> "Yes, SAP. SAP means that there is an SAP system, then if you want to record something, it is recorded by the personnel again. Then there are staff who are actually admins. But, I think that person is office administration. And the current state of the model is that these two things are combined. It's as if the two tasks that were different, maybe put together, become one. And that's not all. Later, then, there will be another secretarial nature. About the secretary it was also mixed with it. So, don't just mix the two, ma'am." (SI)

Another ability is soft skills in the form of the ability to focus on work. According to Zoupanou (2015), the office managers he studied said that interruptions in doing their work were not a challenge and they were able to complete their work despite interruptions. This is due to the manager's ability to prioritize work, set deadlines and duration to be able to do work

Intern. Journal of Profess. Bus. Review. | Miami, v. 8 | n. 8 | p. 01-12 | e03099 | 2023.

7

on time. The next ability is described by Achilike (2013) who argues that problem solving skills are also needed by office managers not only in the context of looking for a job but how to maintain a position. In addition, analytical thinking is also needed. Meanwhile, for secretarial and administrative staff positions, creativity is also needed. What's more, knowledge of a system where graduates are placed is also very important, apart from administrative work that must be technically mastered. Not for office manager, several studies show that employees' creativity should be enriched in the workplace to gain more effective results (Masianoga and Govender, 2023).

> "However, if we talk about admin, secretary, or what the office administration has covered, that's it. Well, it's just that, for the first level, it's still thick with the admin name. That is, if we talk about logistics, yes, he really has to understand logistics. Which is where he collects data, and should at the same time evaluate it." (SI)
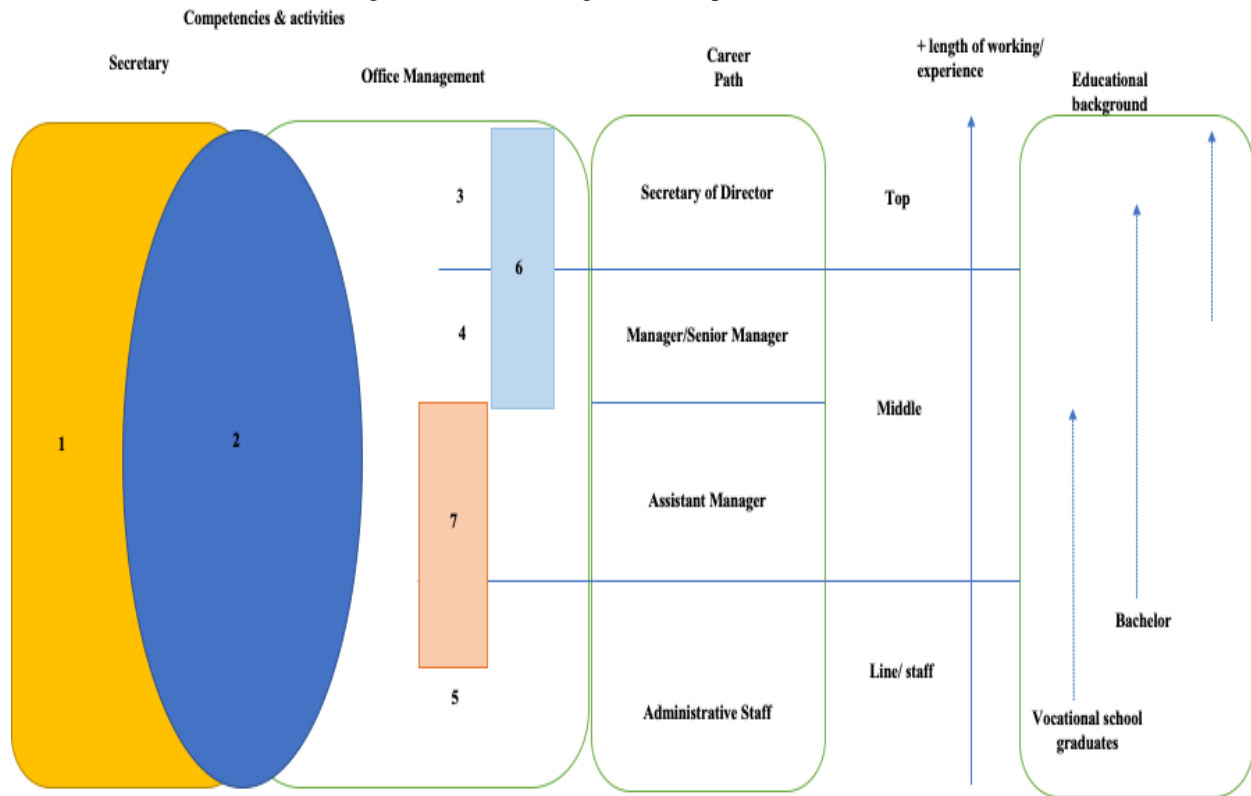
Model of Office Management Competencies

From the previous explanation, it can be concluded that even though Office Management and secretariat have several similar competencies and activities, there are some differences that can distinguish the realm of Office Management and secretarial activities in the industrial world. One differentiator is the realm of competence and Office Management activities which lie on the management side, namely the ability to coordinate and manage several people under them at the same time. Meanwhile, the secretary focuses more on technical work related to documents and internal relations.

Therefore, there should be a model that can clearly illustrate the competencies and activities of Office Management in the industry. In addition to competencies and activities, it is also necessary to have different levels of education with career paths taken by an Office Management graduate. Figure below illustrates the results of data collection and analysis of data taken by researchers.

Figure 1. Office management competencies model

source: authors' analysis

there are several elements or areas illustrated. The first element is competence and activities. This element shows what are the areas of competence and activity of a secretary and also a graduate of Office Management. The second element is the career path. This indicates a career path that can be occupied by Office Management graduates consisting of administration staff, assistant managers, managers, and secretaries to directors. The third element is the management level which consists of top, middle, and line/staff. The next element is experience or length of work. The last element is the educational background which is filled by the level of Vocational school, bachelor, and masters graduates.

As for the numbers in Figure 1, it describes the types of competencies and activities of the secretary and office management. Table 2 below explains the meaning of competency numbers and descriptions and their activities.

Table 2. Descriptions of office management competencies model

No	Description	Competencies & activities
1	Competencies and activities owned by secretary	1. Handle meetings. 2. Typing 3. Fax 4. Photocopy 5. Ordering office supplies 6. Handle business travel

Intern. Journal of Profess. Bus. Review. | Miami, v. 8 | n. 8 | p. 01-12 | e03099 | 2023.

9

		7. Making MOM, 8. Provide beverages 9. Document collecting 10. Receptionist 11. Calling
2	Competencies and activities owned by secretary and office management graduates	1. Computer literacy 2. Manage office (in general for office managers and specific for secretary) 3. Communication
3	Competencies and activities owned by office management graduates and have career position as director's secretary or as level (top management).	1. Client and guest profiling 2. Leadership 3. Delegating works in management 4. Organized work and human resources
4	Competencies and activities owned by office management graduates and have career position as manager and assistant manager or as level (middle management).	1. Data analysis 2. Coordination with all administrative works. 3. Leadership 4. Statistics 5. Organized work and human resources
5	Competencies and activities owned by office management graduates and have career position as administrative staff or as level (line management/ staff).	1. Entry data 2. Basic accounting 3. Archive/ record management 4. Business correspondence 5. Interpersonal relations
6	Competencies and activities owned by office management graduates and have career position as secretary of director (or as level) and manager/ senior manager (or as level).	1. Analytical thinking 2. Problem solving
7	Competencies and activities owned by office management graduates and have career position as assistant manager (or as level) and line / staff (or as level).	1. Multitasking & time management

Source: authors' analysis

CONCLUSIONS

The importance of acknowledging dimensions of office management area, including competencies that it holds, is vastly significant, especially when facing the technology development and industrial revolution, which relates to digitalization. There are several conclusions drawn in this research. First, indeed, the categorization of areas in office management in an office should be decided. By doing this, confusion of having office management graduates or secretary could be avoided. Second, even though office management graduates and secretary are often considered similar, according to previous literature, there are also significant differences between their job descriptions. Third, is this study manages to build a model that contains specifications of office management job description, career path, and educational background. Considering the importance of the aspect of office management and the possibility of disappearing these jobs in the future, there should be further investigation on

more specific job description. The body of knowledge of office management itself should also be determined and detailed. This implies that there should be communication between school or university that hold this program with industries in order to fill in the demand of the industries and the sufficient competencies of the graduates.

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11

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12