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Analyzing the Changing Role of Professional Secretary in Dealing with The Impact of Digital Technology A Case Study on Professional Secretaries in Indonesia

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Abstract –

The purpose of this research is to analyze the preparedness of secretary profession in dealing with the changing role in handling administrative work and the others impact of digital technology. The research objectives are to determine an understanding digital technology in business administration that will have an impact on automating and simplifying secretarial administrative work, to find out the digital technology can replace what kind of executive secretary jobs and to identify competences of the secretary. This study employed use methodology descriptive qualitative with online survey technique with total respondents of 150 Professional Secretaries from various company in Indonesia, and added 25 respondents, who are superiors to secretaries. The research concludes that there are Secretary jobs that have been replaced by tools development of digital technology. Technology Digital helps increase the efficiency of secretarial administrative task, 56% Document filing management, 76% Managing database, 70% Analyzing data and information, 47% Implementing and maintaining administration procedures. It helps track and streamline processes. In fact, this increased efficiency in operation helps reduce costs and time, 82% Organizing meeting, 82% Maintaining diaries, 47% Arranging manager's business travel. This research proposes new competencies of professional secretary that need to be strengthened, specifically in the areas of the digitalization and automation secretarial administrative tasks, management office information system, data analysis, communication, and public relations function. This topic of digital technology in secretarial administrative work in Indonesia has never been discussed before. This has a substantial impact on developing secretarial profession in Indonesia and gives a boarder impact on the preparedness of development the executive secretary role in a company.

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The purpose of this research is to analyze the preparedness of the secretary profession in dealing with the changing role in handling administrative work and the other impacts of digital technology. The research objectives are to determine an understanding of digital technology in business administration that will have an impact on automating and simplifying secretarial administrative work, to find out what kind of executive secretary jobs digital technology can replace, and to identify the competencies of the secretary. This study employed a descriptive-qualitative online survey technique with a total of 150 Professional Secretaries from various companies in Indonesia and added 25 respondents who are superiors to secretaries. The research concludes that there are Secretary jobs that have been replaced by the development of digital technology. Technology helps increase the efficiency of secretarial administrative tasks: 56% Document filing management, 76% Managing databases, 70% Analyzing data and information, and 47% Implementing and maintaining administration procedures. It helps track and streamline processes. In fact, this increased efficiency in operation helps reduce costs and time: 82% organize meetings, 82% maintain diaries, and 47% arrange the manager's business travel. This research proposes new competencies for professional secretaries that need to be strengthened, specifically in the areas of digitalization and automation of secretarial administrative tasks, management office information systems, data analysis, communication, and the public relations function. This topic of digital technology in secretarial and administrative work in Indonesia has never been discussed before. This has a substantial impact on the development of the secretarial profession in Indonesia and has a borderline impact on the preparedness of the executive secretary role in a company.

Keywords – Digital Technology, Professional Secretary; Administrative Work; Competencies.

I. INTRODUCTION

The fourth industrial revolution (Industry 4.0) is currently taking place and is changing the way we communicate, live and work. It represents a fundamental change in the way we live, work, and relate

to one another. The impact of Industry 4.0 is making it easier for companies to collaborate and share data among customers, manufacturers, suppliers, and other parties in supply chain. It improves productivity and competitiveness, enables the transition to a digital economy, and provides opportunities to achieve economic growth and sustainability.

Companies also adopt digital technology to increase their profitability. Since one advantage of technology is limitless communication, companies can extend their reach beyond domestic boundaries and access millions of customers worldwide. Finally, digital transformation is not just important but a requirement for all modern businesses, as the majority firms automate their processes, firms who refuse to make the change will left behind and lose their competitive advantage. On the other hand, there are various incentives for companies to digitize. For example, production will run faster since machines are replacing humans in repetitive tasks. So, the coordination of corporate data in one system allows everyone to work together more seamlessly. [1]

Research submitted in World Economic Forum, 2020, employment trends for jobs in the United States 2007-2018, Executive Secretaries and Executive Administrative Assistants jobs have a high risk of being automated, as shown in Figure 1. The technology and globalization have brought profound transformations to labor markets in near term. Presents the types of roles that are being displaced: computer operator 70% employment change, administrative assistants 63%, filing clerks 48%, data entry operator 36%, and other such role which depend on technologies and work processes which are fast becoming obsolete. [1]

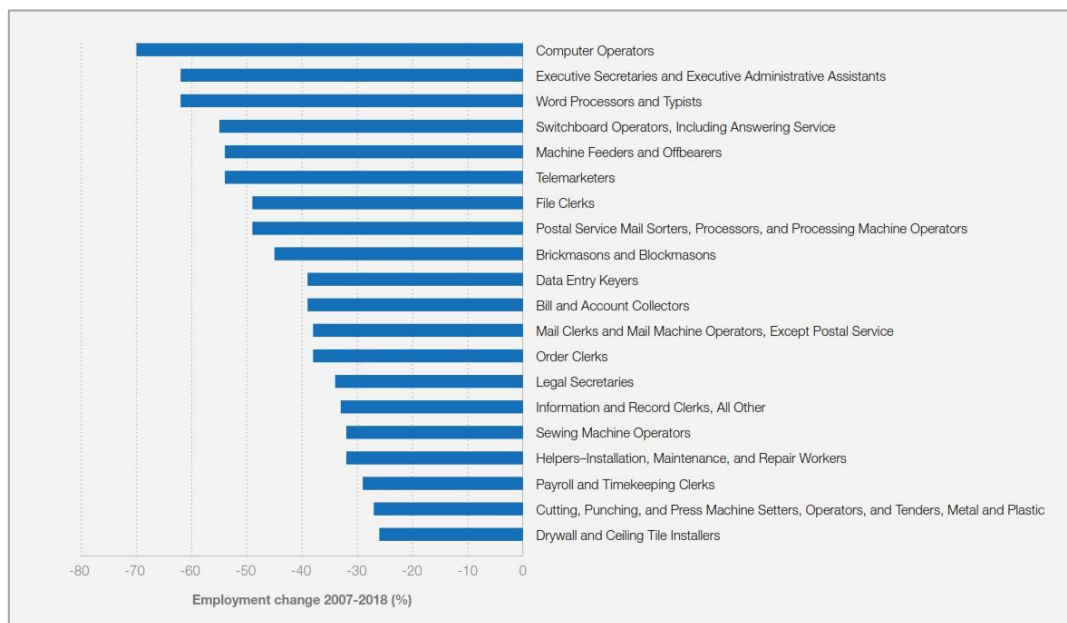


Figure 1. Employments trends for jobs in the United States at high risk of automation, 2007-2018. (Resource: World Economic Forum, 2020)

The secretary is a member of business management team, must be able to keep abreast of business changes and developments by utilizing digital technology to be more productive and efficient in carrying out secretary's duties. In this study will be discussed to find out what kind of Indonesia professional secretary duties that can be automated or replaced by tools development of digital technology, and what kind of professional secretary's competencies that need to be strengthened, specifically in the areas of the digitalization and automation secretarial administrative tasks.

A. Digital Technology

Now, we are in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, where internet technology has become the basis of human life. Digital technology has not only changed our personal lives but has completely

change the world of business and no industry is an exception [2]. Utilizing digital technology and the internet in business activities with the aim of significantly increasing productivity and efficiency.

In general, the digital revolution is driven by four types of technology, that they have a big impact on people's lives: 1) Mobile Internet: smart phones/mobile gadgets have taken over the role of home phones or gadgets that use fixed line for people who access the internet. 2) Cloud Computing: [2]. There are three common benefits to company using cloud services: performance, speed and cost reduction, faster and relatively inexpensive internet network, and accessibility 3) Internet of Things (IoT): there were many million internet-connected devices. Cheaper sensors, faster actuators, and faster and wider internet networks make more areas, connected to one another. As a result, business types, production methods, and the application of new technologies have grown, such as driverless cars, drones, and smart homes. 4) Big Data and Advanced Analytics: Every second there is an exchange of information and high-power computers that can help humans in the decision-making process. In addition, the exchange of information can help businesses because supply chain information processes become more efficient. By digitizing processes and making organizational changes, governments can enhance services, save money, and improve citizens' quality of life [2].

Nowadays companies are dealing with large amounts of data, not only for an important decision but also into their day-to-day activity. To handle properly these large volumes of data, from different sources without missing the opportunities, companies need to figure out how to manage big data to their advantage [3]

B. The Role of Professional Secretary

A secretary is a person who is employed to do office work, such as typing letters, answering phone calls, and arranging meetings, also handles correspondence, keeps records, and does general clerical work for an individual in business office, and related affairs of an organization, company, association.

According to the roles and duties of a secretary in a company, there are many names for secretarial positions such as: Company Secretary, Executive Secretary, Professional Secretary, Administrative Professional, Administrative Assistant, Executive Administrative Executive Assistant, Personal Assistant, etc. [6] [8] [9]

The company secretary's responsibilities may include administration of personnel matters and file companies. The core responsibilities of a secretary or other administrative assistant is to provide administrative support to the senior managers in an organization. This general description means that they may be given a wide range of tasks and responsibilities, based on the specific needs of their organization. They may also be asked to take on a variety of secondary duties.

Secretaries can work in any office environment or business that has a front desk to carry out administrative tasks, arrange staff schedules and manage correspondence. They welcome visitors and determine their reason for stopping by the office, acting as an intermediary to make sure that their coworkers are expecting guests before letting them into office. Secretaries manage general files and records, maintaining a logical organization system so they can easily access and send information when requested. Secretaries can also schedule transportation and lodging for coworkers who travel and prepare documents for business meetings.

Secretaries tend to work typical business hours in an office environment, although some Secretaries may accompany their team on business trips or work late hours to provide personalized assistance. They start the day by checking emails, physical mail, and voice messages to catch up on any office communications that occurred when they were out of the office. They make calls to confirm appointments and send reminders to office staff. Secretaries may attend office meetings and take notes and meeting minutes, then distribute the summary through the office. At the end of the day, they set up outgoing messages.

There are many professional secretary jobs, it can be simplified by sorting it into 3 groups role: 1) Administrative work, 2) Work with people and Business communication. 3) Supporting superior

Table 1. Job Description of Secretary

Secretary's Role	Job Description
Administrative Work	Document filing management Managing database Analyzing data and information Preparing letters, presentation, and report Implementing and maintaining administration procedures Petty cash Using variety of software packages
Work with people and business communication	Answering telephone Welcoming guests/clients Maintaining diaries Arranging appointment
Supporting Superior	Arranging manager's business travel Preparing letters, presentation, and report Organizing meeting Minutes meeting

As the reliance on technology continues to expand in offices, the role of the office professional has greatly evolved. Office automation and organizations restructuring have allowed secretaries and administrative assistants to assume responsibilities [8]

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

A. Data Collection

Data collection process was conducted from December 2021 to September 2022 using the primary online survey method. The collection of research data was carried out through two surveys, the first survey of secretaries or personal assistants, the second survey of company leaders as superior official assisted by a secretary or personal assistant.

The secretary sample 150 respondents. 61% secretaries in national private companies, 8% secretaries in multinational private companies, and 31% secretaries in state-owned companies. The sample included in the analysis encompassed 24% secretaries to top 58% secretaries to middle and 18% secretaries to lower who indicated that they had responsibilities and operational to support the work of managers and company directors, as shown in Figure 2.

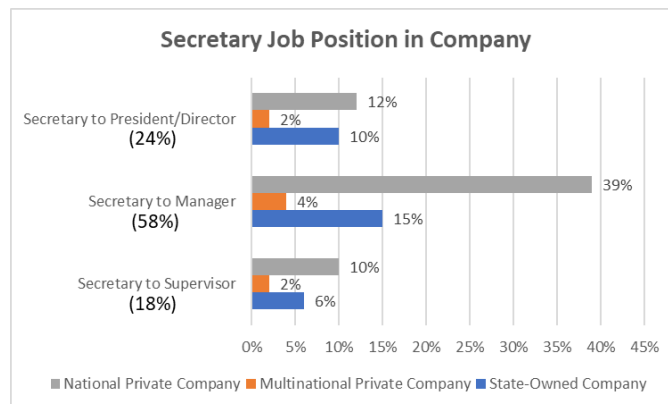


Figure 2. Secretary Job Position in Company

In Figure 3. the superior official of secretary sample encompassed 25 respondents. The respondents were 28% top manager, 48% middle manager, and 24% lower manager. The sample of superior official company included in the analysis encompassed 52% work in national private company, 16% work in multinational private company, and 32% work in state-owned company.

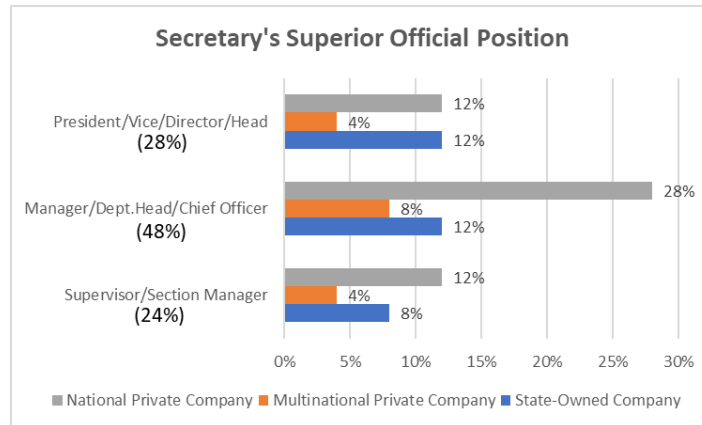


Figure 3. Secretary's Superior Official Job Position in Company

B. Validity and Reliability Data

The literature studies are based on references from various national and international journals; the latest research in the last five years, as well as new books related to digital technology, secretarial jobs, and administrative works. After the data was collected, a peer group of fellow researchers and an IT team checked and discussed the accuracy of the data results. Discussions and observations were conducted using methods for data validity and reliability for a descriptive qualitative method with online survey technique.

C. Research Analysis

The research questions posed to determine an understanding digital technology in business administration that will have an impact on automating and simplifying secretarial work. It was to find out the digital technology can replace what kind of professional secretary jobs, whether the human aspect is still needed in secretary jobs in Indonesia. Then it determines what competency of secretary will need to prepare for.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Results

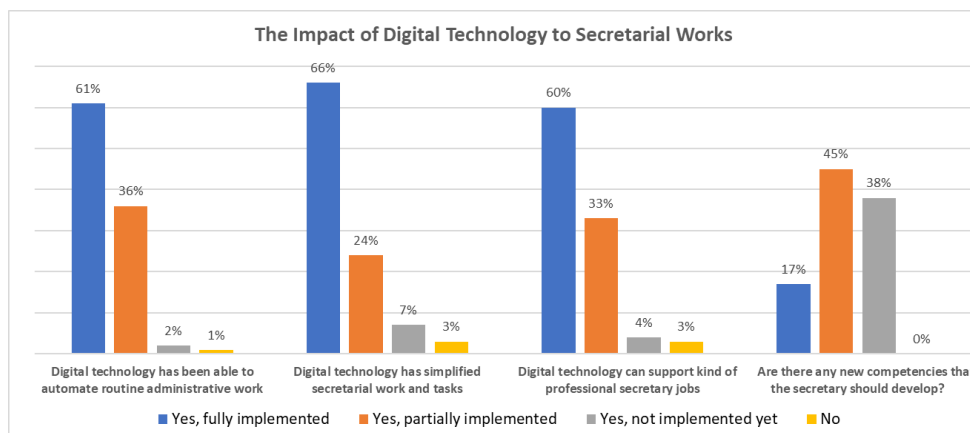


Figure 4. The Research Results: The Impact of Digital Technology to Secretarial Works

The research results have been shown in Figure 4, which concluded 99% of respondents agree that digital technology has been able to automate routine administrative staff, but only 61% that have fully implemented, 36% partially implemented, and 2% not implemented yet.

80% of respondents agree that digital technology has simplified secretarial work and tasks, and 24% have partially implemented, 66% fully implemented and 7% not implemented yet. Only 3% are not agree.

3% of respondents are not agree that digital technology can support secretary job, but 100% respondent agree that secretary should develop some new competencies. Only 17% respondent has already developed new competencies, 45% develop partially, and 38% respondent are not developed yet.

A detailed search results of secretary job description this study is presented in Table II.

Table II. Job Description of Secretary Based on Questionnaire

Secretary's Role	Secretary's Jobs	Description
Administrative work	Document filing management	56% respondents have use computer application to manage document filing
	Managing database	76% respondents manage database by software program application.
	Analyzing data and information	70% respondents process data and information process automatically through information systems / software packages.
	Implementing and maintaining administration procedures	47% respondents have integrated office information system used by the company.
	Managing Petty cash	66% respondents use computer application program or accounting software
	Using variety of software application program	85% respondents use software application program to do the administrative work
with people and business communication	Answering telephone	respondents agree that several applications and tools have not ability to automate answer the phone call satisfactorily
	Welcoming guests / clients	13% respondents record guests who come using a computer application
	Maintaining diaries	82% respondents use mobile apps for online scheduling calendar. (Google calendar, Microsoft outlook Yahoo calendar, etc.

Secretary's Role	Secretary's Jobs	Description
	Arranging appointment	mobile apps for scheduling.
Superior	travel	47% respondents agree these activities would be support by communication channeling, social media, tools, or platform in line with various technologies
	presentation, and report	74% respondents preparing letters, presentation and report are easier, these have been supported by tools or platforms as new technology product.
	Organizing meeting	line with various technologies.
	Minutes Meeting	73% minutes meeting on special form in computer

The research results that some jobs of professional secretary have been supported by tools and platform, software application as new technology product, [10] shown in Figure 5

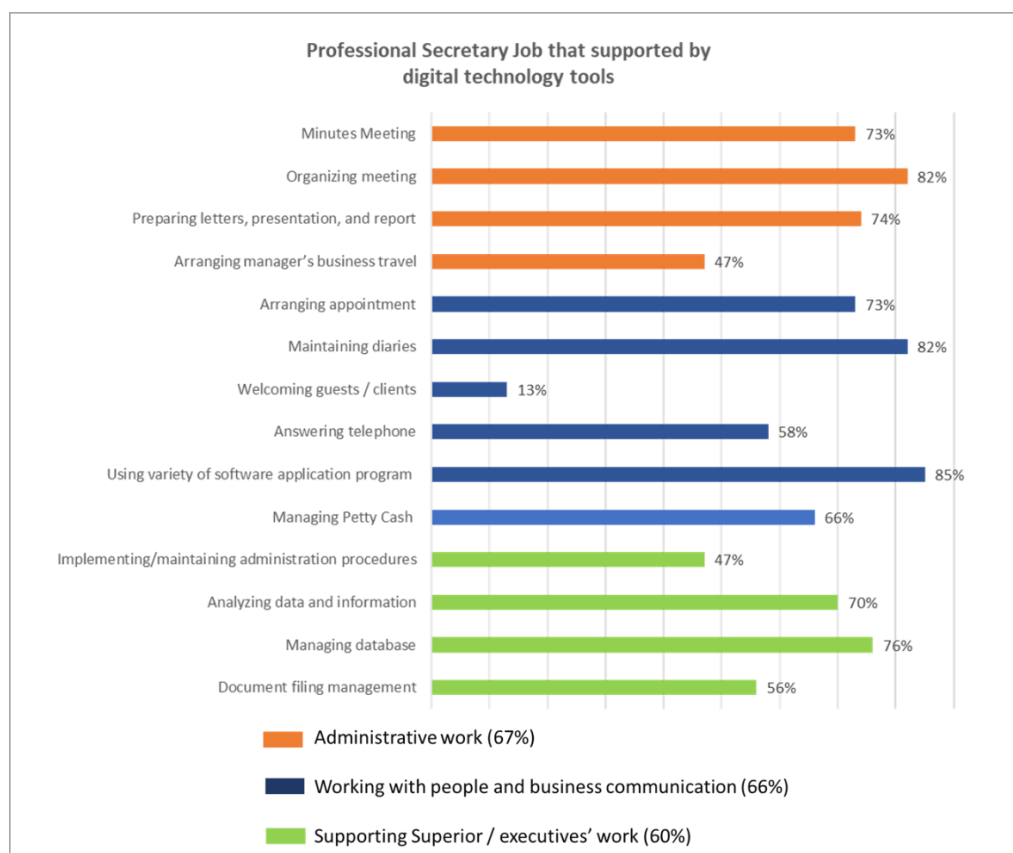


Figure 5. Professional Secretary's Job that Supported by Digital Technology Tools

The research concludes that there are Secretary jobs that have been supported by tools development of digital technology. Technology Digital helps increase the efficiency of secretarial administrative task, 56% Document filing management, 76% Managing database, 70% Analyzing data and information, 47% Implementing and maintaining administration procedures. It helps track and streamline processes. In fact, this increased efficiency in operation helps reduce costs and time, 82% Organizing meeting, 82% Maintaining diaries, 47% Arranging manager's business travel.

It can be concluded that secretary role of 67% Administrative Work, 66% Work with people and business communication and 60% Supporting Superior / executives work is supported by tools development digital technology.

B. Professional Secretary Competencies

Previous research has conducted a study emerging and redundant job role, Role identified as being their [1].

Cause of using development tools of innovative technology such as internet of things and connected devices, cloud computing, big data analytics, artificial intelligence, robots, skills identified as being high demand within organization are creativity, originality and initiative, Reasoning, problem solving and ideation, complex problem solving, active learning, emotional intelligence, analytical thinking and innovation, Leadership and social influence, critical thinking and analysis, service orientation, technology use. [1]

There are administrative Secretary jobs that have been replaced by tools development of digital technology. [10] Digitalize working process, automating, and simplifying secretary work, causes the changing role of secretary, that needed some new competencies.

The Ten skills needed to thrive in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, 2020: Complex problem solving, Critical thinking, Creativity, People management, Coordinating with Others, Emotional Intelligence, judgement and Decision Making, Service Orientation, Negotiation, Cognitive Flexibility. [11] A detailed the secretaries competences needed based on their roles and tasks as shown in Table III, and Figure 6.

Table III. The Competencies Needed According to Secretary Roles and Tasks based on Questionnaire	
Secretary Roles & Tasks	Competencies
Administrative Work:	
Document filing management	78% Critical thinking and analysis
Managing database	97% Technology use / savvy tech
Analyzing data and information	76% Big Data analysis
Implementing and maintaining administration procedures	82% Analytical thinking and innovation
Managing Petty cash	100% Active learning
Using variety of software application program	95% Self-management and creative

Working with people and business communication:

Answering telephone
Welcoming guests / clients
Maintaining diaries

90% Service orientation
70% Emotional intelligence
83% Leadership and social influence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arranging appointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 76% Complex problem solving
<p>Supporting Superior / executives work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arranging manager's business travel Preparing letters, presentation, and report Organizing meeting Minutes Meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 76% Creativity and initiative 73% Reasoning, problem solving and ideation 85% Teamwork building 70% Flexibility and adaptability 100% Time management and multitasking

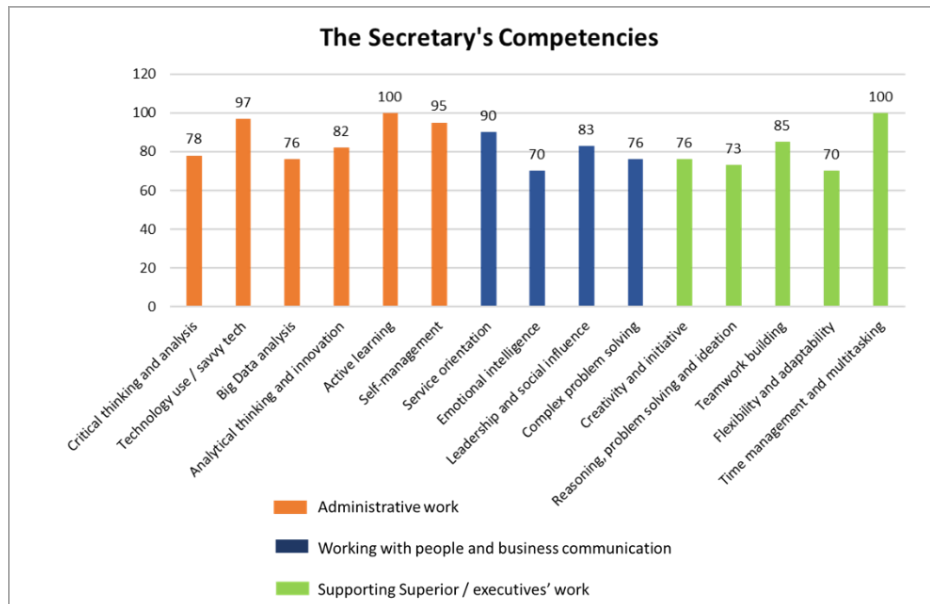


Figure 6. Professional Secretary's Competencies According to Changing Roles and Tasks

In Figure 6. shows that the research results, which concluded that in changing role of secretary administrative jobs and its impact of digital technology, they have to improve competencies in 100% active to learn, 97% tech savvy, 95% self-management, 82% analytical thinking and innovation, 90% service orientation, 83% leadership and social influence, 85% teamwork building, and 100% time-management and multitasking.

IV. CONCLUSION

Digitalization data, information, and communication to simplify secretary work, and the tools available to automate administrative routine task. The further duties of secretary to be a creative savvy tech and to be more optimally utilized for analyzing data and solve the problem.

Digital technology can indeed replace some secretary jobs, with the new tools, platforms, and software application, therefore secretaries are encouraged to learn and trial new tools as needed.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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