

Professional Mentoring and Job Performance of Civil Service Secretaries in South-West, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT- This study aims to determine the influence of professional mentoring on civil service secretaries' job performance in South West, Nigeria. The study has adopted a descriptive survey research design. A total of 351 civil service secretarial staff were selected using a proportionate sampling technique. Two validated instruments, namely, the Professional Mentoring Questionnaire (PMQ) and the Secretaries' Job Performance Scale (SJPS), were used in the study for data collection. The Cronbach alpha reliability test yielded reliability coefficients of 0.78 for PMQ and 0.85 for SJPS. The study indicates a high level of job performance and professional mentoring among secretaries in Southwest, Nigeria. The study also reveals that there is a significant influence of professional mentoring on civil service secretaries' job performance. The study concluded that professional mentoring is one of the significant factors that determine the job performance of civil service secretaries in South West, Nigeria. Therefore, it is highly recommended that secretarial professional training and certification among civil service secretaries or other management executives impart mentoring practices to enhance job performance.

INTRODUCTION

The professional role of secretaries in the administrative functioning of any organization, especially a governmental establishment like civil service, cannot be undermined. A secretary is an office manager who works directly with the executive and has sound knowledge and skills about office management. In justifying the crucial function of secretaries, Khalique and Singh (2019) notes that the position of secretary and his/her presence explains the interpersonal functions of the organization because most of the people who wish to see the manager or the executive of an organization first meet the secretary. The kind of treatment given by the secretary or received will form an impression about the organization. A secretary is a crucial employee in an organization, aiming to alleviate workload and serve as the first point of contact for customers and visitors (Boladele, 2003). The secretary acts as a bridge between an organization and its stakeholders and the public (Khalique & Singh, 2019). Secretaries contribute immensely to the attainment of organizational objectives by handling correspondence and managing other vital information for the organization.

In the global world today, the career role of secretaries has changed from mere office assistance to office manager (Iro-Idoro et al., 2018), and this seems to influence their job performance and effectiveness based on the expectations in various organizations. These changing roles of secretaries and some emerging factors, such as new skills in the profession, advancements in technology and information and communication technology, modern organizational structures, and dynamic job routines, seem to have caused the low performance and ineffectiveness of secretaries in various organizations. The expectations of stakeholders such as employers, customers, and the company's visitors as to the required roles of secretaries are very high. In most offices, secretaries are expected to possess good human relations and communication skills, appear smart and neat, have warm regard for customers, and behave in a manner that will promote the organization and their profession (Oyesode, 2014).

Secretaries are now expected to perform some secondary functions, such as preparing the manager's itinerary, making travel bookings and hotel reservations, supervising the junior workers, and making some decisions using their initiatives, apart from the traditional responsibilities of preparing and handling correspondence, operating computers for mail preparation and communication, attending meetings, and answering telephone calls (Onifade, 2009). No matter the nomenclature, whether office assistance or office manager, secretaries now have lots of ICT gadgets in their disposal to ease their job and ensure proficiency and productivity on their jobs.

Despite the role of secretaries in the functioning of an organization, the performance of the majority of the secretaries serving in the state civil service seems to drop and fall below expectations (Inyang, 2022; Onifade, 2010). They seem not to be motivated at work, which alters their output and quality of job delivery (Odusina, 2025). Many factors are responsible for the declining job performance of secretaries, and executives need to be swift in this area to boost job output in the civil service. Some of these factors seem to contribute to the poor performances, including the presence of emerging technologies that present a different scenario from what they are trained with, coupled with inadequate and dysfunctional office equipment and an epileptic power supply. Onifade (2010), reported that the job performance of secretaries greatly impacted organization's quality service delivery, image, and customer utility. Adewuyi (2018), suggests that exceptional performers, particularly the secretary, are expected to maintain the organization's economic advantage by achieving its set goals.

The effectiveness of secretaries' job performance in organisations including government offices is heavily dependent on some factors or tools, among which include professional mentoring. Professional and seasoned personnel can mentor new and less experienced ones in a company to share knowledge and experience and improve performance (Amadi & Abraham, 2021). This indicates the importance of professional mentoring in ensuring effective job performance in workplace. Meanwhile, research on professional mentoring and its impact on job performance has mostly focused on banks, manufacturing, and hospitality organisations rather than public employees like civil servants, without considering gender moderating roles (Amadi & Abraham, 2021; Chatterjee et al., 2021; Chika et al., 2021; Ekwebelem et al., 2020; Emenyonu et al., 2020; Oladimeji & Sowemimo, 2020; Zarghoni & Rasool, 2021). Also, a combination of these two variables (professional mentoring and secretaries' job performance) has been previously unexplored in studies outside southwest region of Nigeria. Therefore, this study explores the impact of professional mentoring on secretaries' job performance in Southwest Nigeria's civil service.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of this study is to determine the contribution of professional mentoring to secretaries' job performance in the civil service in South-West, Nigeria. The study also specifically conducted to achieve the followings:

1. To determine the level of professional mentoring practices among civil service secretaries in South-West, Nigeria
2. To determine the level of civil service secretaries' job performance in South-West, Nigeria.
3. To determine the influence of professional mentoring practices on job performance of civil service secretaries in South-West, Nigeria.
4. To determine the moderating influence of gender on civil service secretaries' job performance in in South-West, Nigeria.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered in this study:

1. What is the level of professional mentoring practices among civil service secretaries in South-West, Nigeria?
2. What is the level of civil service secretaries' job performance in South-West, Nigeria?
3. Does professional mentoring practices influence the job performance of civil service secretaries in South-West, Nigeria?
4. Does gender moderate the level of job performance of civil service secretaries in South-West, Nigeria?

1.3 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- Ho₁ There is no significant influence of professional mentoring on secretaries' effective job performance in the civil service in South-West, Nigeria
- Ho₂ There is no significant moderating influence of gender on civil service secretaries' job performance in South-West, Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Secretaries' Job Performance

Job performance as a construct in human resource management has received the continuous attention of experts, theorists, and researchers due to its importance in determining the valuable contribution of individuals to an organization (Adewuyi, 2018; Salawudeen, 2018; Warekuromo, 2018). Campbell and Wiernik (2015) as cited by Widhiandono et al. (2022) define job performance as an employee's actions or behavior that directly aids in the accomplishment of organizational goals. Effective job performance of secretaries is crucial for the survival and continuity of any organization, as it contributes to the achievement of its predetermined objectives. Fapohunwa (2014), in Amadi and Abraham (2021), sees job performance as the achievement of a target task assigned to employees within a particular period of time. It is the totality of activities required of employees to contribute to what the organization needs to achieve its objectives (Abosede & Adesanya, 2017). The secretary's job performance is the employer's expectation regarding the secretary's quality and quantity of work, loyalty, reliability, resourcefulness, and overall improvement effort on the job. In an ideal work environment, knowledge of secretaries without other factors would not be sufficient to drive a desired job performance (Edun&Soyebi, 2022). This assertion underscores the importance of factors like professional mentoring in shaping secretaries job performance.

2.2 Professional Mentoring and Secretaries' Job Performance

Workplace mentoring has been a formal practice within organizations for a considerable period (Adewuyi, 2018), but in recent times, it has become popular because many organizations have begun to see it as a mechanism for transferring knowledge from one generation of employees to another. Mentoring is a mechanism used in sharing knowledge and experience and promoting performance in organizations via professional and highly experienced employees to new and less experienced ones (Amadi & Abraham, 2021). Meanwhile, for professional mentoring to be effective and yield the desired result, there must be someone called a mentor to offer guidance and support to the less experienced one. A mentor is a career coach who offers professional assistance, guidance, and encouragement to juniors in order to enhance job performance. The importance of professional mentoring as a proactive approach to transferring professional knowledge and developing the technical skills of new employees cannot be undermined. Adewuyi (2018) highlights that though mentees' job performance is significantly enhanced; their professional development also elevated in the long-run. It also helps mentors during the process of mentorship gain new ideas, enthusiasm, and knowledge that heighten their productivity (Ayodeji & Adebayo, 2015). The experience, knowledge, and technical skills of senior secretaries have been adjudged to pose a greater influence on junior employees' work performance.

A reason is that only experienced secretaries can positively influence less experienced ones via professional support and guidance. This justifies the need to offer encouragement, support, and technical assistance to the junior and less experienced secretaries to contribute to the accomplishment of organizational objectives.

Lots of empirical studies consistently affirmed the strategic role of mentoring in enhancing employees' job performance across various organizational contexts. For instance, Emeyonu et al. (2020) examined the influence of mentoring on teachers' productivity in Oguta Local Government Area of Imo State, Nigeria. The study found that mentoring significantly improves teachers' job productivity, highlighting mentorship as a critical factor in educational performance outcomes. Similarly, Adewuyi (2018) investigated mentoring practices among cataloguers in Nigerian libraries. The findings revealed a significant relationship between mentoring practices and job performance, indicating that structured mentoring enhances technical efficiency in library services. In another study, Ekwebelem et al. (2020) focused on teachers in Oguta LGA, Imo State. Their findings demonstrated that mentoring significantly boosts teachers' job productivity, reinforcing earlier evidence on the value of mentorship in educational settings. Amadi and Abraham (2021) examined mentoring and teacher-quality job performance. The results showed a positive and significant relationship between mentoring and teacher job performance, suggesting that mentoring contributes to improved instructional quality and effectiveness. Beyond the Nigerian context, Chatterjee et al. (2021) investigated mentoring among Indian millennials. The study reported that mentoring significantly influences total job performance, including contextual and task performance, thereby demonstrating mentoring's multidimensional impact on employee outcomes. Within the Nigerian service sector, Oladimeji and Sowemimo (2020) found that exposure to mentoring particularly through counselling and role modeling significantly enhances employee performance, underscoring the practical mechanisms through which mentoring drives productivity. Furthermore, Zarghoni and Rasool (2021) revealed that mentoring has a significant positive impact on employee performance, noting that effective mentoring facilitates knowledge transfer, career development, and skill enhancement. Likewise, Chika et al. (2021) reported that mentoring perception, mentoring style, and communication significantly predict employee performance within higher education institutions.

Despite these extensive empirical evidences establishing mentoring as a significant predictor of employee job performance, important gaps persist in the literature. Existing studies largely focus on teachers, library professionals, higher education personnel, and employees in the general service sector, with little attention given to secretaries in the civil service. Moreover, many Nigerian studies were conducted outside the South-West geopolitical zone or did not specifically examine the civil service structure within that region. Secretaries perform specialized administrative and support functions such as records management, communication coordination, confidentiality maintenance, and office administration which differ considerably from roles examined in prior research, suggesting that mentoring may influence their performance in unique ways. Additionally, the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of the civil service, characterized by formal procedures and structured reporting systems, has rarely been considered in mentoring-performance studies. Consequently, there is insufficient empirical evidence on the predictive role of professional mentoring among secretaries in the civil service in South-West Nigeria, thereby justifying the present study and its contribution to theory and public sector practice.

2.3 Gender and Secretaries Job Performance

Apart from mentoring, gender may also influence secretaries' job performance. Gender refers to the socially defined skills and qualities that are attributed to people based on their purported sexual characteristics mostly male and female (Abul, 2007). In the past, there was a general belief that men possessed more strength and energy on the job and performed better in practical work than women (Tabassum & Nayak, 2021; Benco, 2024; Heilman & Parks-Stamm, 2007; Hoeritz, 2013). Such perceptions shaped recruitment, task allocation, and performance evaluation across many professions. On the contrary, the secretarial profession is viewed as a female-oriented job, which is reflected in the enrolment of students for secretarial administration or office technology and management (Ahmad, 2024). Also, Ogungbemi et al. (2009) investigated job performance as a foundation for gender discrimination in secretaries' employment in Nigeria favoring female applicants. In a similar vein, Olapade (2015) discovered that employers frequently favored female secretaries because of the traditional belief that secretarial labour is feminine.

In another study, Nwosu (2015) found statistically significant gender differences in specific task areas: male secretaries performed better in computer operations, data processing, and meeting coordination, whereas female secretaries excelled in supervision of junior staff and management of office materials. Collectively, these empirical findings suggest that while gender stereotypes influence recruitment and role allocation within the secretarial profession with females having more interest and favored in being secretaries than males which may contribute to their effectiveness and job performance on the job. There is limited research evidence of substantial overall performance differences between male and female secretaries particularly in the civil service. This underscores the need for further investigation into whether gender significantly moderates secretaries' job performance within the civil service context.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The study utilized a descriptive survey research design, involving 3,513 Secretarial staff from the civil service in South-West, Nigeria. A total of 351 civil service secretarial staff in South-West Nigeria were sampled; a representative of 10% of the total population, using proportionate sampling technic. This study used the Professional Mentoring Questionnaire (PMQ) and Secretaries' Job Performance Scale (SJPS) for data collection. The professional mentoring questionnaire, adapted from Ronald (2005), measures secretaries mentoring practices in civil service. It has been used by Azeez (2016) and Popoola (2017), with a reliability coefficient of 0.83. The tool was a 12-item Likert scale with four points ranging from Highly Disagree (HD) to Highly Agree (HA). Items were reworded, modified and restructured to align with mentoring of secretarial staff in the civil service which is the sample focus of this study. A Secretaries' Job Performance Scale (SJPS), adopted from the original Annual Performance Evaluation Report Form (APER Form), being used in the States for rating of Officers in the civil service (secretarial staff inclusive). Adepoju (2015), Adedeji (2016), and Abdul (2016) all employed this tool, and their respective Spearman Brown correlation coefficients were 0.89, 0.90, and 0.89.

The secretaries' superior officers were given the form to complete in order to appraise their performance on the job. The 30-item scale has a 4-point rating system that goes from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used to guarantee the instruments' dependability, and the results showed that the instruments were dependable for the study, with reliability coefficients of 0.78 for the PMQ and 0.85 for the SJPS. Descriptive statistics with mean and standard deviation as well as inferential statistics with regression analysis were used to analyse the data gathered in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Number of Respondents by Gender

The survey involved 351 questionnaires administered to secretaries and superior officers, with 323 completed and retrieved for data analysis, resulting in a 96.6% return rate.

Table1. Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	68	21.1
Female	255	78.9
Total	323	100.0

Table 1 on the demographic information of the respondents reveal that out of 323 secretaries, 68 (21.1%) were male and 255 (78.9%) were female. The implication of this result is that female secretaries are more than male in civil service across states in South W est. This result validates the previous assertion that secretarial profession is a female dominated profession which does not attract the attention of male students

4.2 The level of professional mentoring practices among civil service secretaries in South-West, Nigeria

The analysis in Table 2 reveals that the majority of respondents agreed on all twelve professional mentoring items (mean rating between 2.99 and 3.71 > Average mean of 2.50), indicating a high level of mentoring practices among secretaries in the civil service in Southwest, Nigeria. The total mean of 3.25 also supports this opinion, with standard deviations ranging from 0.68-0.94, indicating a homogeneous opinion on the level of professional mentoring among secretaries in Southwest, Nigeria. The analysis in Table 3 reveals that the majority of job performance items, except item 10 and 30, has a mean rating between 2.69 and 3.50, above the average mean of 2.50 and the grand mean of 3.04 also exceeds the cut-off point of 2.50, indicating. This indicates that the majority of respondents agree on all items, indicating a high level of performance among secretaries in the civil service in Southwest, Nigeria.

The study found that there is that there is a high level of professional mentoring among secretaries in Southwest, Nigeria. This result attests to the fact that mentoring is a professional relationship that allow an secretaries (mentees) to be helped by experienced secretaries (mentors) in acquiring the specialised information and abilities required to enhance professional development and job performance (Oladimeji & Sowemimo, 2020). This means that the high-level mentoring is exhibited or displayed in civil service among secretaries may be connected to the fact that every newly employed secretary must be attached to an office working with a superior officer who may either be a secretary or administrative officer that usually guide and mentor him or her so as to get acquainted with the work procedure of the organisation.

This outcome is consistent with the findings of Aaron et al. (2015), who discovered that public servants had a high degree of professional mentorship, which enhances work performance and has far-reaching beneficial consequences on workplace performance. Also, Oladimeji and Sowemimo (2020) expressed that the existence of professional mentoring guarantees that mentees will experience enhanced skills and knowledge, increased opportunities for career advancement and promotion, improved comprehension of their organisational roles, insights into the culture and implicit norms of the organisation, and the establishment of a supportive environment for secretaries. The result is also in tandem with the finding of Chatterjee et al. (2021) that there is a high level of mentoring among workers but the indices of role modelling was perceived the highest level of mentoring among the indices.

Table 2. The Level of Professional Mentoring among Civil Service Secretaries in South-West, Nigeria

No.	Professional Mentoring Items	Mean	Std Dev
1.	My mentor is always accessible to me	3.71	0.69
2.	My mentor demonstrates professional integrity	3.35	0.77
3.	My mentor demonstrates technical expertise whenever I need him/her	3.27	0.79
4.	My mentor is approachable for professional consultation	3.30	0.88
5.	My mentor is supportive and encouraging	2.99	0.76
6.	My mentor provides objective and useful critiques of my work	3.05	0.84
7.	My mentor always motivates me to improve work output	3.24	0.68
8.	My mentor is helpful by providing direction and professional guidance on secretarial job issues	3.23	0.92
9.	My mentor provides timely, clear and comprehensive answers to my questions.	3.48	0.71
10.	My mentor welcomes and acknowledges contributions at the appropriate time	3.06	0.93
11.	My mentor does suggest suitable resources to be used in order to solve professional problem	3.22	0.85
12.	My mentor does challenge me to extend my abilities by mandating me to try a new method of job performance	3.11	0.94
Total Mean		3.25	0.81

4.3 The Level of Civil Service Secretaries' Job Performance in South-West, Nigeria

The finding of the study clearly shows that there is a high level of job performance among secretaries in civil service in Southwest, Nigeria. This high level of performance among secretary could be attributed the fact that civil service today is characterized by enough training, mentoring and appointment of professional secretaries which have received the necessary education in the field of secretarial profession. This result is consistent with Leppert's (2023) report, which found that public employees do well on the job. In a similar vein, Inyang (2022) found that professional ethics in secretarial practice contribute to secretaries' strong job performance. Additionally, according to Amegayibor (2021), a manufacturing company's excellent personnel performance results in high productivity.

However, several performance dimensions were rated at only moderate levels. These include job understanding (M = 3.09), management of staff (M = 3.09), communication skills inboth written (M = 2.99) and oral (M = 2.89)—as well as interpersonal relations with both staff and the public (M ≈ 2.99). Similarly, work speed and accuracy (M = 2.79), time-bound task accomplishment (M = 2.80), and decision-making ability (M = 2.69) reflect areas where performance is adequate but not optimal. This pattern indicates that while secretaries possess the foundational competencies required for their roles, there may be gaps in efficiency, communication proficiency, and higher-order administrative skills that are critical for enhanced service delivery.

Of particular concern are the relatively low mean scores observed in appearance (M = 2.10), sense of responsibility (M = 2.71), and disciplinary disposition (M = 2.87). The low rating for appearance may reflect lapses in professional presentation standards, which could negatively influence public perception of the civil service. Additionally, the moderate-to-low ratings in responsibility and discipline suggest potential issues related to accountability and adherence to organizational norms. These weaknesses may undermine overall institutional effectiveness despite the presence of strong individual commitment and dependability.

Table 3. The Level of Civil Service Secretaries' Job Performance in South-West, Nigeria

No.	Items	Mean	Std Dev
1	How well he/she understands, organizes and does his/her job	3.09	0.04
2	How well he/she applied his/her professional/technical knowledge	2.89	0.94
3	How much he/she was able to accomplish within a set time frame	2.80	0.16
4	Judgment (Quality of his/her decisions and contributions) where relevant	2.69	0.04
5	Work-speed and accuracy	2.79	0.87
6	Effectiveness of communication - expression on paper	2.99	0.77
7	Effectiveness of communication – oral expression	2.89	0.94
8	Human Relations with the public	2.99	0.63
9	Relations with staff	2.99	0.63
10	Management of staff	3.09	0.70
11	Quality of work	3.39	0.66
12	Productivity	3.39	0.66
13	Effective use of figures/other Data	3.50	0.81
14	Initiative	3.50	0.81
15	Dependability (whether he/she is able to work consistently without close supervision, inspection or compulsion)	3.50	0.81
16	Loyalty to the Organization	3.40	0.79
17	Honesty	3.00	0.99
18	Reliability under pressure	3.00	0.06
19	Sense of responsibility	2.71	0.05
20	Appearance	2.10	0.22
21	Punctuality at Work	2.96	0.86
22	Attendance at Work	3.37	0.75
23	Drive and Determination	3.06	0.89
24	Resource Utilization	3.08	0.93
25	Disciplinary actions	2.87	0.95

continued

No.	Items	Mean	Std Dev
26	Special commendation on outstanding performance	3.09	0.95
27	Offering encouragement to subordinates in line with standards and measures for effectiveness	3.06	0.95
28	Encourages and train his/her subordinates to avoid late assessments of goals	3.32	0.75
29	show good example in terms of punctuality, efficiency and high degree of responsibility in whatever he/she does	3.29	0.86
30	Makes suggestions for changes/adjust methods/procedures that significantly contribute to his own work or that of any associate/subordinate	2.41	0.96
Total Mean		3.04	1.86

4.4 The Influence of Professional Mentoring on Civil Service Secretaries' Job Performance in South-West, Nigeria

The data analysis in Table 4 reveals that professional mentoring contributes about 17% of the variability in secretaries' job performance in civil service in southwest region, with F-value of 30.560 and a significant (2-tailed) p-value of 0.00. The study found that professional mentoring significantly influences secretaries' job performance in the civil service in Southwest, Nigeria, with a significant Beta value of 0.41 ($p < 0.05$), confirming its significant impact on their performance.

The study found from hypothesis one that there is a significant influence of professional mentoring on secretaries' effective job performance in the civil service in South-West, Nigeria. This finding may be attributed to the high level of professional mentoring exhibited among secretaries which helps new entrants to gain more knowledge and experience on the procedure employ for work and this eventually improve their job performance. This shows that mentoring is a professional relationship where a mentor assists a mentee in developing specific knowledge and skills, promoting personal and professional growth and enhancing job performance. Anekwe (2019) confirmed that mentoring is a suitable way to assist employees and gives mentees the chance to advance their knowledge and abilities to boost job performance. This outcome is consistent with the findings of Oladimeji and Sowemimo's (2020) report, which revealed that employee performance is significantly impacted by mentoring functions. According to Chatterjee et al. (2021), job performance and mentorship are strongly correlated. The findings go counter to Amadi and Abraham's (2021) analysis, which found a weak but substantial positive correlation between mentorship and teacher quality job performance

Table 4. Regression Analysis of the Influence of Professional Mentoring on Secretaries' Job Performance

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
0.413	0.170	0.165	3.31685		
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	336.210	1	336.210	30.560	.000
Residual	1639.220	321	11.001		
Total	1975.430	322			
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
(Constant)	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	
PROFESSIONAL MENTORING	.282	.051	.413	5.528	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Performance b. Predictors: (Constant), Professional Mentoring

4.5 Moderating Influence of Gender on the Civil Service Job Performance in South West, Nigeria

The finding also showed that both male and female secretaries had high level of job performance. Also, it was revealed that the job performance of female secretaries is slightly higher than that of male secretaries. This result is attributed to the fact secretarial profession has been a female dominated field which give female secretaries intrinsic drive to perform well at all time because of the notion that it is a female discipline.

This result may also be connected to the fact that female secretaries are careful and neat in handling of office materials and equipment as male may not be worried based on gender characteristics. Also, female secretaries are perceived as possessing greater humility, caution, sartorial elegance, and amiability.

Conversely, male secretaries are often regarded as more innovative, proficient, capable of working additional hours, and adept at handling high levels of stress. While men possess strength and ability, their non-succulent nature may weaken these qualities. This claim is in line with Otamiri and Ogbonda's (2015) report, which emphasises that female secretaries are more adept than males at managing office supplies and equipment. In a similar vein, Kwaghbo et al. (2022) emphasised that female secretaries were more diligent and more adept at maintaining corporate affairs than their male counterparts. This finding is consistent with the finding that female secretaries in the civil service do better than their male counterparts.

These findings imply that gender does not play a substantial role in determining job performance among civil service secretaries in the region. Instead, the uniformly high scores across both groups suggest that other factors such as training, experience, organizational support, and work environment; may be more influential determinants of performance. The consistency in performance also points to a relatively standardized level of competence and professionalism within the civil service, regardless of gender.

Table 5. Level of Job Performance of Civil Service Secretaries in Civil Service in South-West, Nigeria

Gender	Mean	Std. Dev.
Male	91.1014	4.66386
Female	91.6400	5.28189
Total	91.3932	5.00778

Ho2: There is no significant moderating influence of gender on the contribution of professional mentoring, self-efficacy and on-the-job training secretaries' job performance in the civil service in South-West, Nigeria

Table 6 shows an F-value of 121.08 and a significant (2-tailed) of 0.00 without gender, and 90.87 and a significant (2-tailed) of 0.00 when gender was introduced into the model. The result also revealed that professional mentoring contributes 71% of the variance in job performance without gender, and 71% with gender. However, when gender was introduced, it also contributed the same 71%. The results indicate no significant moderating influence of gender on the impact of professional mentoring on secretaries' job performance in the civil service in Southwest, Nigeria. The study found that there is no significant moderating influence of gender on the contribution of professional mentoring, self-efficacy and on-the-job training to secretaries' job performance. This result means that both male and female secretaries performed well on the job when provided with mentoring and training and have strong self-efficacy. This result is in tandem with the report of Kemal and Tantri (2021) that gender does not significantly influence how worker's productivity is affected by work atmosphere, motivation, and job fulfilment. The result disagreed with the Sosik and Godshalk (2000) report that a favourable and substantial correlation between performance at work and gender disparities and professional mentoring. Additionally, Otamiri and Ogbonda (2015) found that male and female secretaries in Rivers State's postsecondary institutions perform significantly differently on the job. It is also in converse with the finding of Armah et al (2019) that gender moderated the influence of social related job satisfaction on the level of employees' performance in the public sector.

Table 6. Regression Analysis Showing the Moderating Influence of Gender on Secretaries' Job Performance

	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
	.844	.712	.706	1.96799	
	.845	.713	.706	1.96913	

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1406.101	1	468.700	121.018	.000
Residual	569.329	321	3.873		
Total	1975.430	322			

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1409.322	2	352.330	90.866	.000
Residual	566.109	320	3.877		
Total	1975.430	322			

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	72.772	3.853		18.888	.000
PROFESSIONAL MENTORING	.149	.032	.218	4.728	.000
GENDER	.335	.367	.040	.911	.364

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the influence of professional mentoring on secretaries' job performance in the civil service in southwest, Nigeria. It was discovered that there is a high level of professional mentoring and there is a significant relative influence of professional mentoring, on secretaries' effective job performance in the civil service in Southwest, Nigeria. The study concluded from the findings that professional mentoring is one of the factors that significantly determine the job performance of secretaries in the civil service in Southwest, Nigeria. This means that there is significant influence of professional mentoring on secretaries' job performance in the civil service in Southwest, Nigeria. Also, it was inferred from the result that gender is not a factor to be considered when examining the performance of secretaries in the civil service. This means that gender of secretaries does not significantly moderate the influence of professional mentoring on job performance of secretaries in the civil service in Southwest, Nigeria.

This study has contributed to body of knowledge by providing empirical based evidence that professional mentoring is an important factor that significantly contributes to secretaries' job performance in the civil service. This will expand the frontier of knowledge in business education on various factors that shape secretaries' job performance. Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it is recommended that superior officers and executives in the civil service strengthen and institutionalize mentoring practices to enhance secretaries' job performance, given the significant influence of professional mentoring on work effectiveness.

Furthermore, government should actively encourage the recruitment of male secretaries and provide them with adequate mentoring and training opportunities to support their professional growth and boost their performance alongside their female counterparts. Finally, professional mentoring programmes should be implemented without gender bias, ensuring that both male and female secretaries have equal access to developmental support, as gender does not significantly determine job performance; rather, competence, guidance, and professional development are the key drivers of effectiveness.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

Boladale Ruth Oluwasina.: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software. **Abiodun Oluwatosin Odusina.:** Data curation, Writing- Original draft preparation. **Abiodun Ganiu Jimoh.:** Visualization, Investigation. **Elkanah Ayodeji Olafare.:** Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND MATERIALS

Data available on request from the authors.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

The authors declare that no generative AI was used in the writing of the manuscript.

ETHIC STATEMENTS

Not applicable.

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