Mind Mapping and Positive Mental Attitude to Enhance Secretarial Duties

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Abstract

Mind mapping is a powerful graphic technique to unlocking the potential of the brain. Studies have proven that work performance, including secretarial duties, are affected significantly by how an individual manages their thinking. Hypothetically, mind-mapping, one of techniques to organize thoughts and produce creative ideas, could help a lot to enhance desired mental attitude (one of our mind's products) which in turns direct the secretarial duties completion with a desired result. The design of the study is Exploratory Research commonly used for Social Science Research. The study is observing and finding patterns of how mind-mapping affects one's mental attitude and enhances one's secretarial duties performance. The findings show that the mind mapping skills support the functions of an administrative professional personnel in planning and executing plans. The findings regarding mental attitude supporting Secretarial Skills also indicate that most of the mental attitude aspects support the secretarial skills.

Keywords: mind-mapping, secretarial duties, positive mental attitude

1. Introduction

Mind mapping is a graphic technique providing keys to unlock the potential of the brain (Buzan, 2006). Mind mapping simply means "a picture in our mind' helping us to: overview of a large subject area, plan and make choices, gather a large amount of data, realize where and how we are going to somewhere and encourage creative problem solving. Mind mapping visualizes the human mind (Shao, 2020).

There have been evidences by scientific researches regarding the advantages of mind mapping in academics and businesses. Mind mapping can improve someone's memory (Farrand et al., 2002; Shao, 2020). It can also foster creativity (Malycha & Maier, 2017; Zampetakis et al., 2007) and improve presentation skills (Buzan, 2006; Takahashi, 2014). Furthermore, mind mapping is able to enhancing learning, increasing confidence and sense of skill (Hector, 2011; Mento et al., 1999; Rezapour-Nasrabad, 2019). Eventually, mind mapping is powerful in motivating people to learn (Goodnough & Woods, 2002; Jones et al., 2012).

Consequently, if someone can do the skills mentioned in the advantages, his or her confidence will improve. When people have high motivation to learn and improve memory, increase presentation and learning skills as well as creativity, then it is a guarantee that their mental attitude will also become positive. These kinds of people will have positive manner towards everything (Batdi, 2015).

Our brain has the functions of receiving information, analyzing, holding information, outputting the analysis result, controlling the information traffic and controlling the direction of all mental and physical function. Mind mapping, according to the studies conducted, is able to improve these brain functions (Buzan, 2006; Z. Sh. Abdunazarova, 2021). Proven by the previous studies and in line with the function of the brain, mind mapping clearly has effects on improving positive mental attitude and in turns enhancing various academic, social, and working skills. Therefore, hypothetically mind mapping can also improve secretarial skills in the administration world.

The study investigates the factors and characteristics of mind mapping on how mind mapping affects the mental attitude which will result in enhanced secretarial skills. Therefore, the study tries to describe the characteristics of successful mind mapping in improving secretarial skills. The study also tries to figure out why positive mental attitude is able to improve secretarial skills. The study contributes some recommendations on how to set up a successful mind mapping system to improve positive mental attitude which in turns will affect the secretarial skills performance. The study will also give a new perspective on how secretarial skill in administration world is improved with certain technique of mind mapping, due to its effect to the person's mental attitude who performs the secretarial skills.

Mind Mapping: Terminology Review

The term mind mapping is defined as the way someone represents an idea with pictures, graphics, colors and shapes (Buzan, 2006; Jones, 2018; Jones et al., 2012). Nesbit & Adesope (2006, p. 415) defined mind mapping, or a concept map as "a type of graphic organizer that is distinguished by the use of labeled nodes denoting concepts and links denoting relationships among concepts". Important concepts and phrases are then connected; they can continue into other concepts and phrases. Furthermore, the text can be supported by images and color.

In academics, mind maps aid students to absorb information by organizing it and add images and color to it. According to Nesbit & Adesope (2006), these maps are useful because students are able to build a two-dimensional space to assemble ideas and concepts which are relevant to one another. Mind maps help students build a 'mental picture' to optimize their learning (Budd, 2004) and can be utilized as a learning tool that allows them to make ideas connection in meaningful ways.

Mind Mapping, Academic, and Professional Achievement

There have been several studies conducted regarding the effect of mind mapping on academic achievement, education and students' academic performance. Collected from national and international sources between the years 2005 to 2013, studies conducted by Batdi (2015), tried to investigate any important connections between the effectiveness of mindmapping and students' scores retention. In this context, 15 studies were included in the meta-analysis, based on the inclusion criteria. The results point out that mind mapping has a positive effect on academic achievement, attitude and retention. Another earlier study by Holland et al. (2004) was about an investigation into the concept of mind mapping and the use of mind mapping software to support and improve student academic performance. Most respondents in the study felt that mind mapping had a very positive effect.

In professional world, a study by Motha et al. (2016) aimed at studying the perception of employee motivation of Quality Assurance Design Department which was carried out at TVS Sundaram Clayton Ltd. in Padi, Chennai. Previously, most instructors still used strategies consisted mainly of lecturing and individual paper-work. An effective strategy of mind mapping was then applied and showed that it enabled the employees to absorb and retain much more information. These effects improved the employees' motivation a lot, which in turns also enhance their positive attitude towards work. The study has proven that mind mapping contributes to the advancement and optimization of skills and work motivation.

Facts and relationships among ideas that are held in the mental map firstly need to be studied, understood and designed, and then drawn (Jelić et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2012). In this way, one is able to remember the information in the mental map visually and verbally, which

improves concentration of the learning process and support creative thinking. To build personality and grow professionally, a person needs to develop imagination and creativity, which is a task of the mind. On the contrary, information obtained through a computer will not allow that complex process to happen. The mind is a 'dynamic self-organizing system which develops patterns of activity and mental activity depending on the cognitive abilities of the individual (Jelić et al., 2014).

Positive Mental Attitude and Secretarial Work

A positive mental attitude means the attitude of our mind, supported and energized by our thoughts, which tends to be positive, in a way that the mental attitude express enthusiasm. Moreover, as having been mentioned by Rhomanel Bette et al. (2021) that an attitude, or knowing how to be, is a crucial factor in the job of a secretary or administrative professionals. Furthermore, Jelić et al. (2014) register the list of positive mental attitude characteristics as openness, courage to explore ideas and intuition, including self-understanding.

Openness or courage to explore ideas features sensitivity to problems, aesthetic sensitivity, courage, a sense of humor, playfulness, fantasy and imagination, risk acceptance, tolerance of ambiguity, persistence, openness to experience, emotional sensitivity, adaptability, intuition, willingness to develop, rejection of authoritarian claims without critical review and integration of diversity and contrasts (Jelić et al., 2014). Meanwhile, intuition, a quality that includes self-understanding (Jelić et al., 2014) is a vision of where ones want to go and commitment to action that is necessary for its achievement. Features in this category include awareness of creativity, perseverance or endurance, self-leading, internal control, introspectiveness, freedom from stereotypes, concentration, energy and work ethic.

Any information that goes through a human mind will contribute to his or her attitude since attitude is a result of whatever happens in one's mind. All the visual and verbal information, as well as the mental picture and abstract concepts are responsible of how someone's mood is determined at a point of time. Consequently, because mind mapping carries information and mental pictures, mind mapping will contribute something to someone's attitude. The proper mind mapping is a good resource for the proper attitude (or 'positive mental attitude'). Proper attitude is said by Gaiseanu (2021) as the construct of mind. It is obvious that proper mind gives effect to proper attitude. Tuladhar (2010) stated that managerial work, which is highly supported by an administrative professional or a secretary, is significantly supported by positive mental attitude. Positive mental attitude, which belongs to emotional skills allow the secretary to perform competencies successfully, increasing the quality of work and productivity (Rhomanel Bette et al., 2021).

Secretary: Roles and Duties

The word Secretary has been defined variously by different authors and employers. Talking about etymology, [Latin] word *secernere* means "to distinguish" or "to set apart"; the passive participle (*secretum*) means "have been set apart," with the final connotation of something private or confidential. A *secretaries* was a person, therefore, overseeing business confidentially, originally for a high-rank persons such as a king or pope (Adam, 2015). In the later progressive meaning of the term 'secretary', there are some of the practical definitions. Onifade (2011) defined a secretary as "An assistant to an executive, possessing mastery of office skills and ability, assumes responsibility without direct supervision, who displays initiative, exercises judgment, and makes decisions within the scope of her authority." A Secretary is the person who supervise and control the execution of daily chores that is attached to executive's time. A Secretary serves as a significant

administrative support in an office to increases the effectiveness of program staff by controlling the paper flow of the office and executing the daily administrative activities required (Onifade, 2010). A secretary is a person of confidentiality (secrets), assistance or support or help, professional code of ethics, typing skill and communication skill. A Secretary should manage to keep secrets of the organization and that of his/ her superiors (Onifade, 2010).

Seeing the definition of the term 'secretary' having been mentioned, there are several roles that can be listed as a secretary's main responsibilities and characteristics such as a person of support, assistance or help. He or she carries out activities assigned to him or her by the executive or takes initiative which is within his or her authority and responsibility (Onifade, 2011; Tuladhar, 2010). Then, a secretary is also a person who interacts with people, as the first contact of people visiting the organization and because of the operation of the telephone for the organization and his or her boss (Kakabadse et al., 2016; Onifade, 2011). Moreover, a secretary's communication skill, human and public relations skill must be distinguished (Tuladhar, 2010).

Kakabadse et al. (2016) once analyzed company secretary's effectiveness. The conclusion states that the company secretary role is quite dependent on, and similar to, the chairman role and is crucial to the running of the organization. It was also found that the most effective company secretaries are those who are able to perform greater voluntary capacity in their role (Kakabadse et al., 2016). It means that a company secretary's duties are not limited to only clerical and administrative job, but also advisory work to a management decision making process, which determines the overall company's direction.

In a recent survey conducted by Professional Secretaries International (Adam, 2015), it was found that only 41 percent of office professional are using the title "secretary" in today's offices. The word 'Secretarial Practice' has been used to cover knowledge, skills, procedure and methods of work to be performed by a Private or Office Assistant. Adam (2015) also investigated that individuals with secretarial skills are relatively easy to find employment in all types of offices e.g., government, public or private, different types of agencies etc. in terms of secretarial practice such as Typist grade, Stenographer grade, Receptionist, Secretary, Personal Assistant (PA), Executive Secretary; all of them are located in big and small cities.

Having been reviewing some crucial previous researches and the common ground of the research, the study is then to reveal the contributing factors and characteristics of mind mapping and how mind mapping impacting the mental attitude and resulting in enhanced secretarial skills. Eventually, the study is to describe the characteristics of successful mind mapping in improving secretarial skills. The study is also to investigate why positive mental attitude is able to improve secretarial skills.

2. Methodology
2.1. Research Design
The research is qualitative with limited use of numbers and figures only for describing tools. The design of the study is Exploratory Research which is commonly used for Social Science Research. This study has investigated how mind mapping and positive mental attitude are able to enhance and optimize secretarial duties assigned. Therefore, this study investigates the following points, which correspond to the research purposes: (1) to describe the characteristics of successful mind mapping in improving secretarial skills; (2) to seek the factors why positive mental attitude is able to improve secretarial skills; (3) to give the recommendations for the work-area where mind mapping is applicable.

To conduct the research on investigating those research points, the following steps in data collection were conducted: (1) arranging a set of questionnaires; (2) modifying the questionnaires

and distributing them to the respondents; (3) conducting analysis and the interpretation of the data collected.

The findings of data analysis and interpretation are used to describe the phenomena corresponding to the research points and making qualitative inferences. Due to the Exploratory Research nature, and the purpose of the research, the participants in the research is a group of the alumni of Widya Mandala Secretarial Academy and Administrative Professionals Program whose job descriptions cover the area of Secretarial Studies, Personality Development, and Office Information Technology. There were thirty-four (34) alumni who are currently working in the secretarial jobs field. The reasons to select these participants due to the usage of purposive sampling selection, according to the qualitative research framework (Alwasilah, 2019; Palinkas et al., 2015). These participants represent the quality of the research participants; they have fulfilled the requirement of having the jobs related to secretarial field and implementing the skills and knowledge of Secretarial Studies. Due to the nature of qualitative study, the objective of the study is to explain the process: describe and map the pattern of how to improve secretarial skills using mind mapping and positive mental attitude.

2.2. Research Instrument

Qualitatively, the research instruments are the writers themselves. They have observed and analyzed the questionnaires results, recorded the observation, and analyzed the data. The data are gained from the questionnaires results containing the alumni' answers. The data analysis is conducted by decoding the questionnaires result and interpreting it using categories, and patterns. After decoding and interpretation process, the writers see the similar patterns occurring or similar categories which appear.

3. Result and Discussion
3.1. Factors of Successful Mind Mapping in Improving Secretarial Skills

The respondents in the study are all from professionals in administrative professional field and they come from different company's backgrounds. Here is the description of how long they have been working in the companies and the companies' line of business.
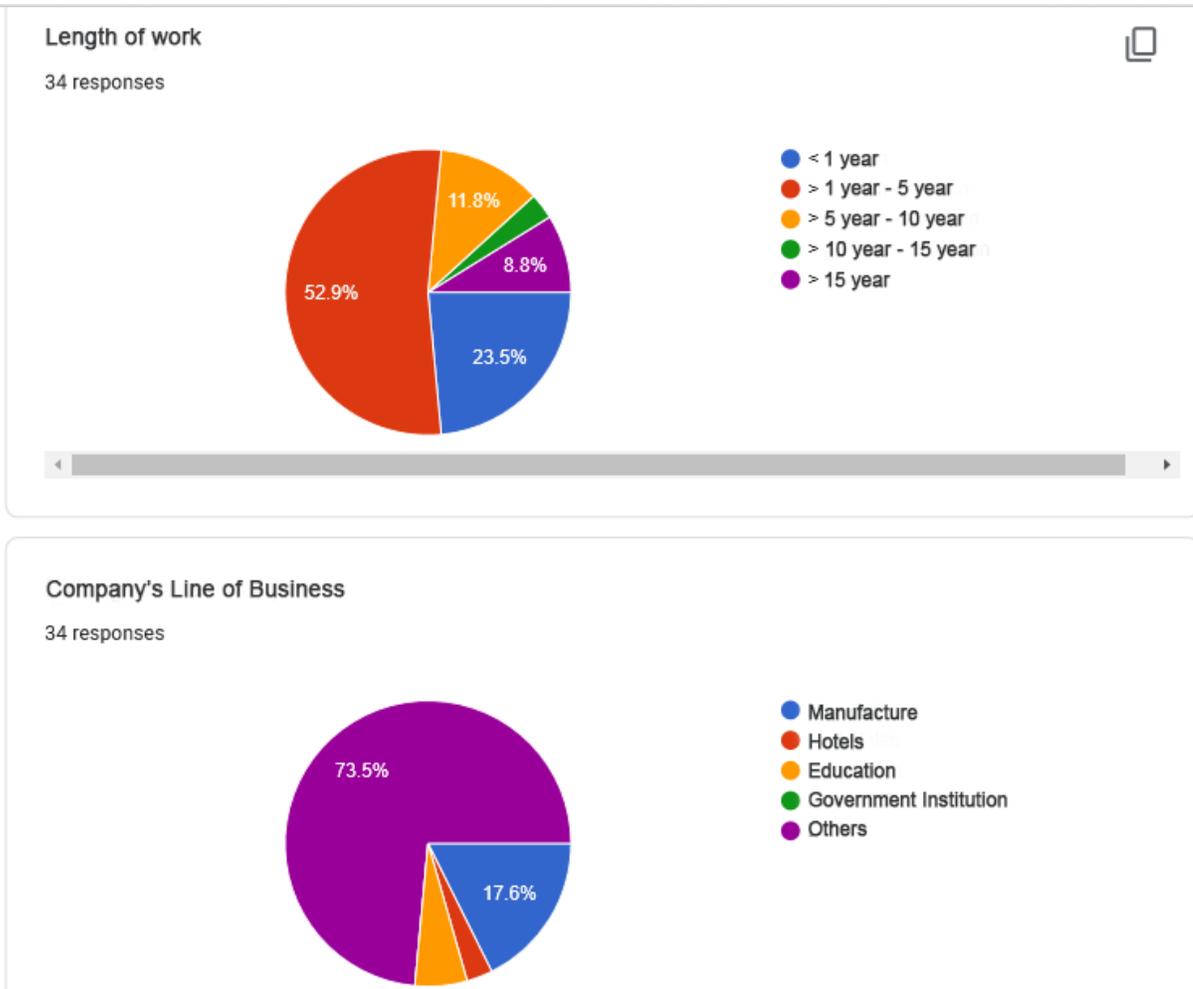
Figure 1. Length of Work and Company's Line of Business

From the diagram, it is seen that the majority of respondents have been working in their companies in average for five years (52.9% of respondents work between one to five years and 11.8% work for more than five years). It can be inferred that they have understood comprehensively their job, tasks, and any consequences regarding their work. It means that their answers to the survey and their opinion are relatively reliable for this research data.

From the diagram, it can also be stated that the respondents' voices are representative enough to be the voices of general administrative professionals since they come from relatively various line of business (73.5%). Moreover, in majority, the companies are limited companies (73.5%). Therefore, the companies are considered to be managed professionally enough, not the ones belong to the group of micro or small entities.
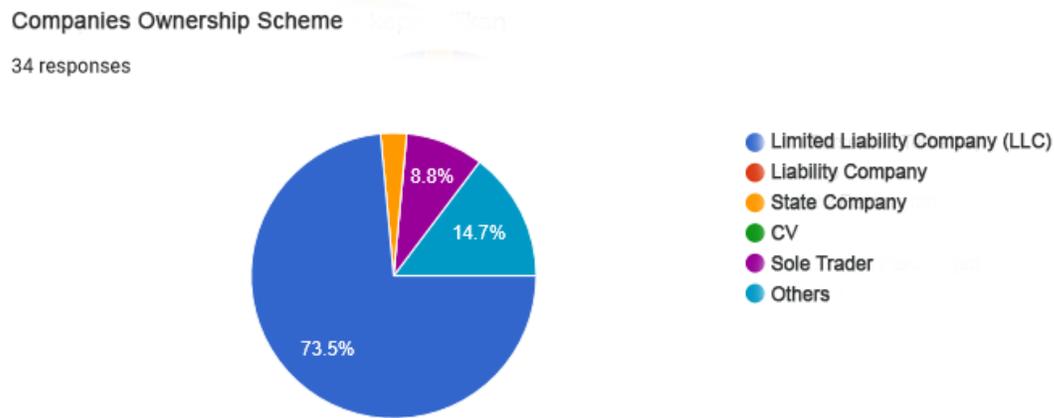
Figure 2. Companies Ownership Scheme

The following parts are discussing the findings generated from the data collection and seeing how the data answer the research questions.
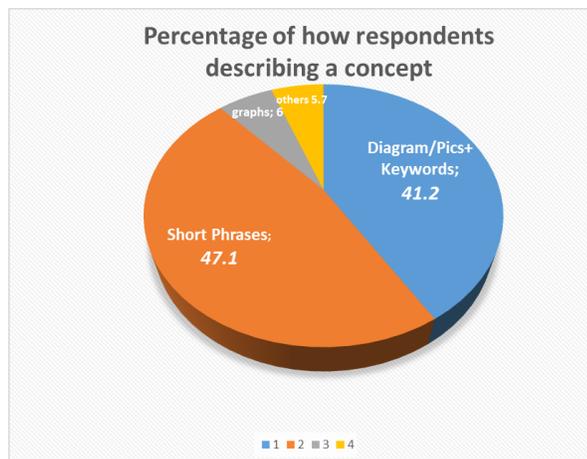

Figure 3. Percentage of How Respondents Describing a Concept/ Idea

The research revealed that majority of the respondents use pictures, diagram, combined with short phrases/key-words to create a mental picture of a concept or an idea. The respondents 'translate' the idea into a picture, or a diagram, combined with short phrases/ key-words in their mind and store it. This finding is also supported by the study by Medkova & Prykhodko (2021), pointing out that mind mapping is a powerful tool for planning a concept, which is one important job of a secretary or an administrative professional (Kakabadse et al., 2016).

The next finding showed that the majority of the respondents use pictures, diagram, combined with short phrases/key-words to describe a concept--meaning to plan and to interpret it. This is to transform the idea into somewhat 'a visualization'. Then, it is also found that majority of the respondents use pictures, diagram, followed by short phrases/key-words for self-idea-processing when they received instructions from their superior or information from the company's clients. Later they have to process the instruction and execute it. The secretary or the administrative professional needs to transform it into steps of execution. Regarding the information from the company's clients, the secretary needs to create a meaningful feedback, in line with the public

relations' function of a secretary (Cismaru & Novac, 2015). Therefore, the result study has confirmed that the use of visual forms using colors, pictures, and dimensions supports conversion of information. This finding is supported by Vorona-Slivinskaya et al. (2020) in their study. They found that mind mapping a useful tool to visualize any information in the professional world.

In addition, the research has found majority the respondents use short phrases/key-words for self -idea-production (productive skills). It means that they pour out their ideas (into a piece of paper or in their soft files) in the form of short phrases and key words. This is similar to what has been found by Israel et al. (2021) that mind mapping helps in the organization of knowledge and memory. The use of short phrases and key words is to make the information more manageable and more easily organized (rather than in the forms of long words and sentences). Regarding the use of mind mapping to organize information and make it more easily to manage, Hope (2017); Mattos et al. (2012); and Pollitt (2003) also found that mind mapping has been helping the professionals in handling details to capture, track, complete and evaluate the entire process.

In summary, the functions of a secretary or administrative professionals are significantly supported by the mind mapping skills in terms of planning, organizing (Stulz et al., 2013) and executing the plans and concepts. The respondents showed that in majority they used graphs, figures and symbols in making the plan and during the process of the execution. In conclusion, mind mapping has greatly assisted secretaries and administrative professionals in their professional work to produce professional documents (Grant & Archer, 2019), making a good presentation for the companies (Medkova & Prykhodko, 2021), organizing information, records and archives (Michetti & Haufek, 2021), maintaining a good conduct of public relations (Cismaru & Novac, 2015), and visualizing concepts or plans (Vorona-Slivinskaya et al., 2020)

3.2. Positive Mental Attitude in Improving Secretarial Skills

As summarized in Figure 4, The respondents agreed that they expressed this state of mind after successful delivering an idea or a concept to people. The majority of the respondents are happy and grateful after executing good planning; it shows some of the positive mental attitude aspects appearing after good planning (or it is concluded that good planning and execution are impacts of positive mental attitude). However, few of them has no appreciation on the process; it is shown by their comment saying that they felt nothing special after good planning and execution. Eventually, very few are worrying if it works continuously; these respondents felt that the good planning and execution might be just an incidental occasion.

Figure 4. Mental Attitude after Good Planning and Execution

Therefore, the respondents' responses correspond with the following aspect of positive mental attitude: risk acceptance, tolerance of ambiguity, persistence, openness to experience, which are usually expressed by thankfulness, as stated by Jelić et al. (2014). The state grateful and joyful (thankfulness) are hand in hand with risk acceptance, tolerance, yet persistence and openness. Grateful and joyful share the same majority percentage, 22.81%.

Table 1. Key Words in Minds after Good Planning and Execution

No	Key words (expressing mental pictures) when being able to plan dan execute it well	Percentage	Notes/short interpretations
1	Grateful	22.81	Positive attitude (static)
2	Happy/joyful	22.81	Positive attitude (static)
3	Proud	14.04	Positive attitude (static)
4	Future improvement	10.53	Positive attitude (dynamic)
5	Excited	8.77	Positive attitude (dynamic)
6	Relieved	8.77	Positive attitude (static)
7	Satisfied	7.02	Positive attitude (static)
8	Motivated	1.75	Positive attitude (dynamic)
9	Appreciating self	1.75	Positive attitude (static)
10	Optimistic	1.75	Positive attitude (dynamic)

Meanwhile, there are some other aspects correspond to future improvement and excitement after good planning and execution. 4th and 5th rank out of 10 key-words for positive mental attitude (which implies potential-dynamic-active attitude to do an activity) in Table 1. indicated positive mental attitude which signaling dynamic attitudes. They share 10.53% (for future improvement) and 8.77% (for excitement). It can be concluded that people with these positive attitudes are impacting in good planning and good execution. This finding is also confirmed by Ying et al. (2017) saying that people with positive mental attitude can enhance people's ability to carry heavy

workloads and rapid working pace The following table indicating the state of mind after being able to transfer ideas well to others.

Table 2. Key-Words in Mind after Being Able to Transfer Ideas Well

No	Key words (expressing mental pictures) when being able to transfer an idea well (to others)	Percentage	*Notes/short interpretations*
1	Happy/joyful	35.71%	Positive attitude (static)
2	Grateful	21.43%	Positive attitude (static)
3	Excited	7.14%	Positive attitude (dynamic)
4	Satisfied	7.14%	Positive attitude (static)
5	Nothing special	7.14%	*Neutral*
6	Proud	5.36%	Positive attitude (static)
7	Relieved	3.57%	Positive attitude (static)
8	Optimistic	3.57%	Positive attitude (dynamic)
9	Confident	3.57%	Positive attitude (dynamic)
10	Future improvement	3.57%	Positive attitude (dynamic)
11	Feeling supported	1.79%	Positive attitude (dynamic)

The majority is happy and grateful; They share 35.71% for happy and joyful while grateful shares 21.43%. The following (3rd rank out of 11 key-words for positive mental attitude), which implies potential-dynamic-active attitude to do an activity, is excitement; it shares 7.14%. The summary also shows that few of them has no appreciation (7.14%) and finally none is worried if it only works once. This result corresponds to what Jelić et al. (2014) stated. The feeling of happiness, gratefulness and excitement cover the aspects of risk acceptance, tolerance of ambiguity, persistence, openness to experience, emotional sensitivity, adaptability, willingness to develop. These aspects are under the positive mental attitude of openness and courage to explore ideas. Somehow, the feelings appeared, according to the respondents, after finishing the transfer ideas process. These aspects of mental attitude are confirmed by Muradova (2021) that positive thinking skill is an important factor related to problem-solving, happiness, and resulting in job performance. Sakina et al. (2017) also supported this finding, pointing out that employees with positive work attitude will expect a positive outcome and make them more successful.

In addition, the findings from the questionnaire regarding mental attitude supporting Secretarial Skills show that most aspects of registered mental attitude supported the secretarial skills, around 90% to 100%. Only keyboarding skills are valued by the respondents as relatively low supported by mental attitude (40%). Please see Figure 5 for the description. This occurrence means that in order to do the secretarial work well, an administrative professional needs significant supports from his or her mental attitude. As having been pointed out by Rhomanel Bette et al.(2021) that a secretary or an administrative professional needs 'an attitude' in performing the job. As having been seen from the result, most of the secretarial skills require communication skills and supported a lot by positive mental attitude. This finding has agreed with Muradova (2021) who found positive and significant correlation between positive thinking skills and internal communication. Consequently, improving positive mental attitude, the level of internal communication also improves.
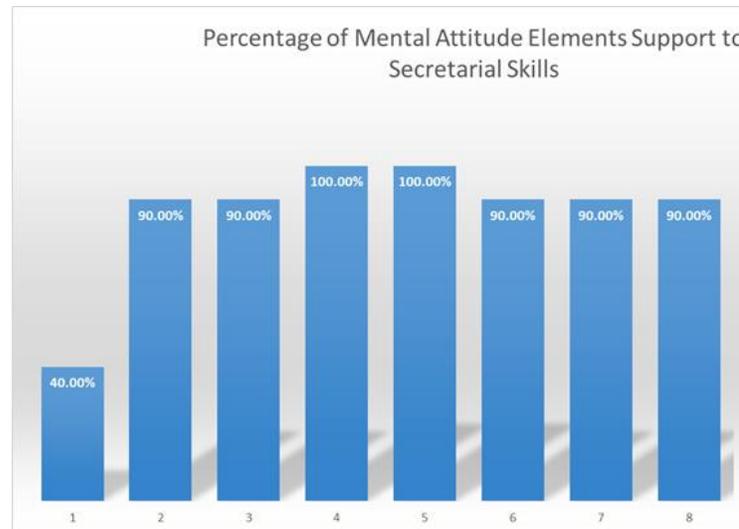
Notes of the graph

Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Skills	Keyboarding skills	Document production	Correspondence	Communication skills	Public relations skills	Telephoning	Special office responsibilities	Adaptive skills

Figure 5. Mental Attitude Percentage Supporting Secretarial Skills

3.3. Recommendations for Working Mind Mapping

Reviewing the technical definition of what a secretary is, the secretarial role is a job requiring skills nobody else can have if one has never undergone secretarial studies education (Adam, 2015). These are the skills that someone with no formal education in secretarial skills will miss or have difficulties to perform, namely keyboarding skills, about how to type with speed and accuracy; document-production skills, how to type memos, letters, reports, tables etc.; proof reading skill; how to correct people or bosses written errors and mistakes, which has to do with comprehension, English Grammar and spellings; correspondence skills, able to check correspondence writing referring to all the standards and practices under the typewriting skills such as paragraphs, spaces, designs of business letters, creative typing, clear and admirable presentation of work; punctuations; and many, many more.

Seeing how the mind mapping activities conducted by the respondents in their daily working activities, the description of how the mind mapping could impact their area of working is presented in the following table. There are at least six areas of administration office jobs which have potential connection with the mind mapping activities. Eventually, it is found that seven out of the eight areas are significantly affected; they are: document production, correspondence, communication skills, public relations skills, telephoning, special or specific responsibilities (given by the superior/ management) and adaptive skills. Only keyboarding skill is not directly making use of mind mapping activities.

Therefore, it is recommended that mind mapping is used when the administration office practitioners perform the following areas of job, except keyboarding. The mind mapping can be used to optimize the professionalism of the staff when performing the tasks. Most of the areas which benefit a lot from mind mapping is planning, determining working path, and work-flow chart. All of these are related to preparing a concept, logical path, and changing abstract concept to an execution.

Table 3. Key-Administrative Professional Skills and Mind Mapping

No	Key-administrative professional-skills	Recommended to use mind mapping	In what area
1	Keyboarding skill	No	
2	Document production	Yes	working path/flow chart
3	Correspondence	Yes	planning
4	Communication skills	Yes	planning
5	Public relations skills	Yes	planning
6	Telephoning	No	
7	Special/specific office responsibilities	Yes	planning
8	Adaptive skills	No	

4. Conclusion

The mind mapping skills supported the functions of an administrative professional personnel in terms of planning and executing the plans. The respondents showed they used graphs, figures and symbols in planning and executing the plan. The findings regarding mental attitude supporting Secretarial Skills also indicates that most of the mental attitude aspects supported the secretarial skills. The aspects of positive mental attitude which supported the secretarial skills are the feeling of happiness, gratefulness and excitement cover the aspects of risk acceptance, tolerance of ambiguity, persistence, openness to experience, emotional sensitivity, adaptability, willingness to develop. As seen in the research result, the majority of the secretarial skills need communication skills and supported mainly by positive mental attitude.

5. Suggestion

It is recommended that an administrative professional makes use of mind mapping to support the daily activities within the work-area of the administrative professional job. Mind mapping can optimize the professionalism of the staff when performing the tasks.

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