

**CHANGING ROLE OF THE  
COMPANY SECRETARY IN MALAYSIA**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
List of Tables	iv
List of Figures	v
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	3
1.2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY	4
2. LITERATURE REVIEW	5
2.1 COMPARISON BETWEEN JURISDICTIONS	5
2.1.1 Mandatory Appointment of The Company Secretary	6
2.1.2 Non-Mandatory Appointment of The Company Secretary	13
2.2 SUMMARY OF JURISDICTIONS COMPARISON	16
3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	17
3.1 TYPES OF DATA	17
3.2 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT	19
3.3 SAMPLE DESIGN	21
3.3.1 Sample Size	21
3.3.2 Data Collection Procedure	21
3.4 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES	23
3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE SAMPLING PROCEDURE	24
4. RESEARCH RESULTS	26
4.1 SUMMARY STATISTICS OF RESPONDENTS	26
4.1.1 Demographic Profile of the Company	26

4.1.2	Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents	31
4.2	LEVEL OF INVOLVEMENT IN THE DUTIES	36
4.2.1	Level of Involvement in the Primary Duties	36
4.2.2	Level of Involvement in Other Duties	40
4.2.3	Level of Liaison with Professional Advisors	42
4.3	PRINCIPAL ISSUES RAISED BY RESPONDENTS	43
4.3.1	Demands for Better Involvement in Corporate Governance	43
4.3.2	Status of the Company Secretary	45
4.3.3	Professionalism of the Company Secretary	46
4.4	RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND DUTIES INVOLVEMENT	46
4.4.1	Cross Tabulation and Its Significance	47
5.	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	54
5.1	OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY	54
5.2	MAJOR FINDINGS	54
5.3	IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	56
5.3.1	Implications for the Company Secretary	57
5.3.2	Implications for the Chairman and the Board	57
5.3.3	Implications for MAICSA	58
5.4	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	59

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

## **APPENDICES :**

### **APPENDIX A : SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **APPENDIX B : LIST OF COMPANIES**

### **APPENDIX C : MASTER CODE FOR STATISTICAL ANALYSIS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The role and responsibilities of the company secretary may not be so well known as that of the other profession like the accountants, advocates and solicitors, architects and doctors. It is also not well defined in company legislation nor does the Act in its present state distinguish between full time and professional company secretary. Thus the role of a company secretary in this context is somewhat confusing to outside parties as far as the scope of responsibilities is concerned. From the traditional role as a mere keeper of company's documents, in recent years, the role of company secretary calls for professional knowledge and skill. Today, the recognition to the status of the company secretary is strengthened with the amendments to the Companies Act requiring them to be either a member of a professional bodies or license by the Registrar of Companies and is further legally formalised as an officer of a company.

The present study attempts to explore in details in the company secretarial function in Malaysia public listed companies.

Primary data was collected through five-page self-administered questionnaire. The sample consisted of 56 company secretaries of public listed companies in KLSE. The research is only confined to respondents in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor areas. Majority of the respondents was from companies listed in the main board. Industrial sector bagged the highest responded rate.

The literature on the work of the company secretary tends to treat all public companies as alike, and, consequently, presents a common perspective on the secretarial role. Also, the concern of the literature is typically external to the company, focusing on issues such as company law, corporate regulation and good professional practice.

By contrast, the research emphasised the strikingly different ways in which the role can be fulfilled, varying from a full time, a highly influential officer of the company, to an external agency fulfilling the minimum requirements.

The survey produced a wealth of information on the types of company involved. The questionnaire survey also produced a profile of company secretaries in public listed companies and outlined for the first time in Malaysia the extend of involvement of their duties. Relationship between the employment status of the company secretaries and the duties involved were also analysed. Principal issues raised by respondents were also discussed. Areas of major concern included the effects of demands for better corporate governance and the status of company secretary and professionalism of the company secretaryship.

Possible implications and recommendations for company secretaries, for chairmen and board members and for the MAICSA were developed. Finally, the study ends with recommendation for further research.

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table</b>		<b>Page</b>
Table 3.1	Number of Companies Involved	22
Table 4.1	Industrial Classification of Companies	27
Table 4.2	Market Capitalisation of Respondents	27
Table 4.3	Annual Turnover of Respondents	28
Table 4.4	Total Assets of Respondents	29
Table 4.5	Board Listing on KLSE of Respondents	30
Table 4.6	Structure of Board of Directors of Respondents	31
Table 4.7	Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	32
Table 4.8	Level of Involvement in the Primary Duties	38
Table 4.9	Level of Involvement in Other Duties	41
Table 4.10	Level of Involvement with Professional Advisors	42
Table 4.11	Principal Issues Identified by Respondents	44
Table 4.12	Relationship between Employment Status and Duties Involvement	50

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
Figure 4.1	Market Capitalisation of Respondents	28
Figure 4.2	Total Assets of Respondents	29
Figure 4.3	Board Listing on KLSE of Respondents	30
Figure 4.4	Employment Status of Respondents	34
Figure 4.5	Professional Qualification of Respondents	34