

**THE IMPACT OF STUDENTS' SECONDARY SCHOOL BACKGROUND
IN SHORTHAND AND TYPEWRITING ON THEIR PERFORMANCE AT
THE NIGERIA CERTIFICATE IN EDUCATION (NCE) LEVEL**

SANI IBRAHIM

Department of VOC and TECH Education
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria

ABSTRACT

The researcher suspects that most of the students who encounter difficulties in the study of shorthand and typewriting at the NCE level have poor or no secondary school background in these subjects. The paper investigates the impact of students' secondary school background in shorthand and typewriting on their performance in the subjects at the NCE level. The Z statistic was used in analysing the data collected. The result reveals that there is significant difference in the performance of students with and those without secondary school background in shorthand and typewriting in the subjects at the NCE level. Four recommendations were made. One of them is that the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should amend its entry requirements into business education programs of colleges of education for those students who wish to eventually specialise in office/secretarial education to include credit in both shorthand and typewriting at the ordinary level.

Introduction

Business Education, as a course, is vast and comprehensive in nature because it is made up of many inter-related areas of study; accounting, marketing, secretarial studies. Business subjects are taught in most Nigerian schools, enabling students to acquire good skills, develop their talents and live independently of paid employment (self-reliance) after leaving school.

Numerous researchers have made contributions regarding the concept of business education. Ibrahim (2008) described business education as that aspect of the total educational programme that provides knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as a producer and consumer of

goods and services that business offers. To Aliyu (2001), business education is the type of training which, while playing its part in the achievement of the general aims of education at any given level, has for its primary objective the preparation of people to enter into a career, to render more effective service therein and to advance from their present level of employment to higher levels.

The business education programme is an umbrella which covers all business courses. At the secondary school level, subjects like economics, commerce, principles of accounts, business methods, office practice, typewriting and shorthand are offered to students. At the teacher-training education level (Nigeria Certificate in Education and Bachelor of Education), it is grouped into three (3) options; accounting education, distributive/marketing education and office/secretarial education. In the final year at the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) level, students are allowed to choose from the three optioned areas, by implication area of specialisation. At the degree level, the choice is made right from the beginning. Naturally at the degree level, most students who pass through the colleges of education always choose the option in which they specialised in at the NCE level.

Statement of the Problem

Students complain bitterly about the rate at which they fail shorthand and typewriting at the NCE level. Teachers also complain of students' poor performance in the subjects. The researcher suspects that most of the students who encounter difficulties in the study of shorthand and typewriting at the NCE level have poor secondary school background in these subjects. Most students get admitted to read N.C.E Business Education without secondary school background in shorthand and typewriting. They are given admission based on the entry requirements stipulated by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE); credit in English, Mathematics and any other three (3) business subjects. The required three credits for admission may be in any of a variety of business subjects, shorthand and typewriting not necessarily inclusive. The reality however is that shorthand and typewriting are core courses at the NCE 1 and 2 levels.

It is against this background that the researcher intends to find out the impact of secondary school background in shorthand and typewriting on the performance of NCE business education students in the subjects. Accordingly, the central question this research will attempt to answer is "what is the impact of secondary

school background in shorthand and typewriting on the performance of business education students in these subjects at the NCE level?"

Objectives of the Study

The study has two objectives as follows:

1. To find out if there is any significant difference in the performance of NCE students who have secondary school background in shorthand and that of students who do not have any secondary school background in the subject.
2. To examine whether there is any significant difference in the performance of NCE students who have secondary school background in typewriting and that of students who do not have any secondary school background in the subject.

Research Hypotheses

In line with the above stated objectives, the following null hypotheses were tested in the course of this research work:

1. There is no significant difference in the performance of students with secondary school background in shorthand at the National Certificate in Education level and that of those without secondary school background in the subject.
2. There is no significant difference in the performance of students with secondary school background in typewriting at the National Certificate in Education level and that of those without secondary school background in the subject.

Significance of the Study.

A number of groups will benefit from the result of this study. Students, especially those at the secondary school level, 100 and 200 NCE levels, will find the result of this study useful. Those of them who wish to eventually opt for the secretarial/office option at the final year of the NCE business education programme will be in a better position to take informed decision as to whether a secondary school background in shorthand and typewriting is significant in studying the subjects at the NCE level.

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Guidance counselors in secondary schools will also find the result of the study helpful. This is because their job of counseling business students with regards to choice of subjects will be greatly simplified.

Parents will find the result of this study interesting. This is because parents are interested in the educational performance of their children. Again, they bear the brunt of the cost of educating their children. It thus follows that anything that improves the performance of their children in school is of interest to them, as it means that their money is well spent.

Curriculum and educational planners will find the result of the study useful. It is likely to make them take a second look at a lot of things as they presently are.

Employers of labour and the general public will be interested in the result of the study. The students are a part of the larger society. Besides, they will eventually enter the world of work on completion of their studies.

Literature Review.

Business Education enables individuals to secure employment in occupations requiring skills in such subjects as typewriting and shorthand. Aina (1984) believes it educates and prepares individuals for and about business, jobs and self-employment. Adeboye (2002) described shorthand and typewriting as practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge subjects. They develop manual and mental skills in students. Adesina (2005) stated that shorthand and typewriting are skill subjects. For teachers to effectively teach the subjects, they must understand the subjects and be knowledgeable and competent in the skill of teaching.

Ibrahim (2000) found that shorthand and typewriting are both conceptual skill as well as motor skill subjects. Students must first understand the theory before they can develop dexterity in acting according to the theory.

Shorthand comprises of a good combination of skills. That is why Aluwong (2007) described shorthand writing as the integration of a myriad of skills and knowledge in producing mailable shorthand transcription such as memos, letters, reports and other types of written communication.

In supporting Aluwong, Aliyu (2008) stated that shorthand involves a number of skills rather than a single skill. Thus, he believes that in order to write shorthand well, students must first be able to use typewriters/computers.

Research Methodology.

According to Nachmias (1992), research design is the program that guides the researcher in the process of collecting, analysing and interpreting data. It allows inferences to be made concerning relationships, and it also defines the domain of generalisability.

The method adopted in conducting this research is the descriptive survey method. This method was used because it is appropriate for the study of a targeted population through its sample. Descriptive research designs are in different forms; they include surveys and case studies.

Population of the Study

Population in a study is the group of people or objects the researcher is studying. The term population could be people, schools, institutions, animals, specimen or countries.

This study is a case study of Federal College of Education, Zaria. Though a case study, the result of the study is generalisable to business education students of other colleges of education. Accordingly, the population of this study is made up of all business students of Colleges of Education.

Sample of the Study

The sample of the study is made up of 40 students who specialised in the secretarial/office option as shown in the table below:

Table 3.1: Distribution of Sample.

Class	No of students	Students with shorthand and Typewriting back-Ground	Students without shorthand and Typewriting Background
2006/2007	18	14	4
2007/2008	22	13	9
Total	40	27	13

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The sample, as tabulated above, comprised of students who completed their studies at the end of the 2006/2007 session and those who completed their studies at the end of the 2007/2008 academic session.

All data used for this research work were gathered through secondary sources; the data used are existing information in students' academic record files, which were not generated purposely for the purpose of this research.

Procedure for Data Collection.

The researcher sought permission from the Head, Department of Business Education, Federal College of Education, Zaria, to collect the necessary data for the study. The permission was duly granted.

The researcher personally went through the academic record files of all the students who completed their studies in the 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 academic sessions. Of the lot, 40 students were identified who specialised in the secretarial/office option. The scores of each of the 40 students in shorthand and typewriting for the two semesters of their final session in the college were jotted down, along with their gender. The fact regarding having secondary school background in shorthand and typewriting or not was also identified and recorded for each of the 40 students.

Data Presentation and Analysis.

From the data collected, the mean score and the standard deviation for the factors of influence – with background and without background – were calculated. The Z statistic was then used to test for difference between the two groups of students with regards to their performance in shorthand and typewriting.

The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance. At this level of significance, for the two-tailed test, the critical Z value is 1.96. If the calculated Z value is less than or equal to the critical Z value, the null hypothesis (that is there is no significant difference between the two groups) cannot be rejected. If on the other hand the calculated Z value is more than the critical Z value, then the null hypothesis must be rejected

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant difference in the performance of students with secondary school background in shorthand at the Nigeria Certificate in Education level and those without secondary school background in the subject.

Table 4.1: Test of difference in performance in shorthand of students with secondary school background and those without secondary school background

Variable	Students with secondary school background			Students Without Secondary School Background			Z
	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	
Performance in Shorthand	27	60.67	7.56002	13	40.15	8.17360	2.27

Table 4.1 above compared the performance of students with secondary school background in shorthand against the performance of those without secondary school background at the Nigeria Certificate in Education level in the subject. The calculated Z value is 2.27. This means the null hypothesis must be rejected. There is a significant difference in the performance of the two groups.

Table 4.2: Group statistics of performance in shorthand of students with secondary school background and those without secondary school background in the subject.

	1=WITH, 2=WITHOUT	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PERFS	1.00	27	60.6667	7.56002	1.45493
H	2.00	13	40.1538	8.17360	2.26695

Table 4.2 above displayed the group statistics of performance in shorthand of students with secondary school background and those without in the subject. The mean and standard deviation for those students with secondary school background are 60.6667 and 7.56002 respectively. On the other hand, the mean and standard deviation for students without secondary school background are 40.1538 and 8.17360 respectively.

Hypothesis Two:

There is no significant difference in the performance of students with secondary school background in typewriting at the National Certificate in Education level and those without secondary school background in the subject.

Table 4.3: Test of difference in performance in typewriting of students with secondary school background and those without secondary school background.

Variable	Students With Secondary School Background			Students Without Secondary School Background			Z
	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	
Performance in Typewriting	27	58.19	5.18	13	47	14.35270	3.98

The table, 4.3, above compared the performance of students with secondary school background in typewriting and those without secondary school background in the subject at the Nigeria Certificate in Education level.

From the table, the calculated Z value is 3.98. This means there is a significant difference in the performance of the two groups. The null hypothesis of no significant difference between the two groups must therefore be rejected.

Table 4.4: Group statistics of Students with secondary school background in typewriting and those without secondary school background the subject.

	1=WITH, 2=WITHOUT	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
PERFT	1.00	27	58.1852	5.18160	.99720
P	2.00	13	47.0000	14.35270	3.98072

Table 4.4 above showed the group statistics regarding the performance of students with secondary background and those without secondary school background in typewriting. The mean and standard deviation for those students with secondary

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