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**INFLUENCE OF STUDENTS' RELATED FACTORS ON SHORTHAND ACHIEVEMENT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN NORTH-EASTERN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract**

*The study examined the influence of students' related factors on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria. The study is guided by three objectives, research questions and hypotheses. The study adopted a survey research design and ex-post facto design to examine the variables under investigation. Structured questionnaires were administered to 360 randomly selected business education students of colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria. Data collected was analyzed using multiple regressions. The findings of the study revealed that study strategy self-concept and attitude have significant and positive influence on achievement of business education students in shorthand in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria. Hence, the consistent failure of business education students in shorthand particularly in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria can be reduced and achievement can also be improved. The present study recommend that shorthand lecturers should encourage business education students in colleges of education to develop a positive attitude towards shorthand and have good self-concept and study strategy as these will improve the students' achievement in the course and minimize the massive and consistent failure recorded among business education students in shorthand; specifically, in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria.*

**Keywords** study strategy, self-concept, attitude, business education students, shorthand achievement

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**Introduction**

Business Education being one of the major aspects of vocational education, impart practical oriented skills to the students so that they can be self-employed after graduation and contribute immensely to the world of work in the area of business enterprise (Okoro 2018). Business education is an aspect of total educational

programme which provides the recipient with knowledge, skills, understanding and attitude needed to perform well in the business world as a producer or consumer of goods and services (Abdullahi 2002). Furthermore, Osuala (2004) is of the opinion that Business education is a broad area of knowledge that deals with a nation's economic system and also identifies and explains the rate of business contentment and experience that prepare individuals for effective participation as citizens, workers and consumers. The National Open University of Nigeria [NOUN] (2008) views business education as an aspect of vocational education that equips people with necessary skills and theoretical knowledge needed for performance in business world either for job occupation or self-employment. Business education students must be well prepared for future labour market in acquiring the necessary skills and dexterity to enable them perform effectively in Business Ventures (Rhoda, 2015). In addition, Osuala in Okoro (2018) observes that business education is a programme of instruction which consists of two parts; office education which is a vocational programme for office career and general business education which is also a programme that provides information and competency needed for managing business.

It could be deduced from the above arguments that business education is an education for and about business, it combines both theoretical and practical knowledge, and it exposes recipients to the economic system of their country and equips them with lifelong skills that would enable them to make reasonable judgment as a producer (entrepreneur), employee or consumer of goods and services (Okoro 2018). He added that, business education curriculum comprises the following: Typewriting, Shorthand, book-keeping, commerce and office practice. The author also stated that it is interesting to note that shorthand is a course, which forms part of the core courses of business education programme, it has the potentials of improving the vocational skills and academic performance of an average higher education Student. Shorthand is a symbolic method of writing rapidly with quick method of using symbols, by implications, shorthand is a mode of writing quickly with already learnt symbols (Adebusi, 2001). The author also asserts that the students, businessmen, journalists, verbatim reporters, doctors, nurses and other professionals have found shorthand relevant to the world of work. The relevance of shorthand in business education has been the concern of many people, especially secretaries, employers, professionals and non-professionals (Rhoda 2015). Furthermore, Anderson (2011) believed that shorthand skills will continue to be needed in business education and it is noteworthy that the purpose of training/development in business education is to enable students acquire the skills that will be relevant for their job performance and that every curriculum is expected to make beneficiaries apply the skills acquired in solving problems in the work place. Shorthand is a veritable tool, because it works through the medium of languages, its educative value

can be seen in the area of temperament standard of work and attitude of the mind (Okoro, 2018). A sound knowledge of shorthand is essential to note taking, shorthand has the ability of molding life, it instills discipline by being careful when writing, it builds confidence into writers, and also, the knowledge of shorthand, no doubt, benefits vocabulary, reading, phonetics, spelling and other language skills, (Okoro, 2018).

Adebusi (2001) in his part, highlighted that the primary objective of shorthand is to develop in the students the ability to take dictation with sufficient speed and accuracy to produce amiable. Sunday (2005) on the other hand stated that it is worthy to note that shorthand is indispensable to the business education profession and much emphasis should be given to it. The author further asserts that, for the students, shorthand helps in developing their reading and writing abilities, especially in the area of written and oral English, and for the graduates of business education, proficiency in shorthand is very essential especially in situations where the job demands secrecy in business or where a quick recording of information is necessary. Despite these importance of shorthand to business education students, the shorthand performance of students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria is declining at an alarming rate (Musa, 2019, Okoro 2018, Rhoda 2015 & Silvia 2011). Specifically, the shorthand performance of students in Colleges of Education in North-Eastern Nigeria is far from impressive as record from colleges of education in North-Eastern state shows that students' performance in shorthand over the years is highly discouraging. But, the arguments exist in the literature that the factors contributing to students' achievement in shorthand have not been completely established (Baba, Aburiya, & Azeesi 2018).

In view of this, various researches that might enhance the academic achievement of students in shorthand have been suggested. For instance, Silvia (2011) argued that student's self-concept is a very important factor that might contribute to students' academic achievement. Similarly, Cokley & Patel, ((2007) maintained that student's self-concept is one of the student-related factors that can contribute to their academic achievement. On the other hand, Tenaw (2015) is of the opinion that attitude is one of the major factor that positively affects the academic achievement of students. Semukono and Arinaitwe, (2014) also affirmed that attitude is the strongest determinant of the academic achievement of students. Furthermore, Mattarima & Hamdam (2011) are of the view that study strategy can play a vital role in determining the academic achievement of students. In support of this, Okoro, (2018) recommended that further study on academic achievement of students in shorthand should be conducted to involve students' study strategy. However, no published study was found to have focused on the influence of study strategy, self-concept and attitude on students' achievement in Shorthand. In view of the above arguments, the present study aims to examine the influence of students' related factors on shorthand achievement of business education

students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria. Specifically, the study will focus on study strategy, self-concept, attitude, and students' achievement in Shorthand.

### **Research Objectives**

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of students' related factors on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to;

- 1 Determine the influence of study strategy on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria.
- 2 Determine the influence of self-concept on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria.
- 3 Examine the influence attitude on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research question were formulated to guide the study.

1. What is the influence of study strategy on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria?
2. What is the influence of self-concept on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria?
3. What is the influence of attitude on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges in North-Eastern Nigeria?

### **Null Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis were formulated to guide the study:

- H<sub>01</sub>: Study strategy has no significant influence on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria.
- H<sub>02</sub>: Self-concept has no significant influence on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria.
- H<sub>03</sub>: Attitude has no significant influence on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Concept of Self-Concept**

Self-concept refers to a perception every human has of himself or herself, it is a component of personality development that indicates who we are and how we fit into the world (John, Abduljaleel, & Emma, 2014). According to them self-concept is a set of perceptions or reference points that the subject has about himself, a set of

characteristics, attributes, qualities and deficiencies, capacities and limits, values and relationships that the individual knows to be descriptive of himself and which he perceives as data concerning his identity. This definition embraces issues including the set of knowledge and attitude that people have about themselves; the perceptions that the individual assigns to himself or herself and characteristics or attributes that people use to describe their selves. This is understood to be fundamentally a descriptive assessment and has a cognitive nuance (Manning, Bear & Minke, 2006).

Self-concept is an important factor that has direct influence on behavior (Nalah, 2014). He also made the following statements on self-concept; with emphasis on educational attainment in Nigeria, self-concept and academic performance are interrelated. Both positive and negative self-concepts have relationship with academic output of students. He further emphasized that self-concept is a characteristic inherent in the personality of every individual, but different individuals have self-concept in varying qualities as suggested by the positive and negative self-concept and in varying quantities as implied by the low and high self-concepts. Self-concept is therefore defined as an organized and consistent way an individual think, feels, and reacts to issues concerning himself or herself arising from his/her personal experience in life (Nalah, 2014).

### **Concept of Attitude**

Scholars have viewed attitude in a number of ways. For instance, Neale (2011) defined attitude as a behaviour that influences an individual to make things. Roberts and Saxe (2009) added that attitude is a way a person responds to his or her environment, either positively or negatively. In a more objective term, attitude may be said to connote response consistency with regards to certain categories of stimuli (Anastasi, 1990). He said further that, in actual practice, attitude has been most frequently associated with emotionally toned responses. Zimbardo and Leippe (1991) defined attitude as favourable or unfavourable evaluative reasons whether exhibited in beliefs, feelings, or inclinations to act towards something. According to Neale (2011), attitude is commonly referred to as beliefs and feelings related to a person or event and their resulting behavior. This means that when individuals have to respond quickly to something, the feeling can guide the way they react. Thurstone (1990) on the other hand, viewed attitude as a measure of students' positive and negative feelings toward a subject in terms of relevance and value, difficulty and self-efficacy, and general impression toward a subject.

According to Fishbein and Ajzen (2010), attitude is an expression of inner feelings that reflect whether an individual is favorably or unfavorably disposed to some attitude object. Likewise, Thurstone (1998) conceptualized an attitude as a combination of an individual's evaluative judgments about a given object. Most of the studies of students'

attitude towards a school subject (see for, example, Erdogan, Bayram, & Deniz, 2008; Neale, 2011; Schultz & Koshino, 2013) operationalized attitude as the extent to which the students show positive interest towards a subject. When social psychologists talk about some one's attitude, they refer to beliefs and feelings related to a person or an event and the resulting behavior tendency. Taking together, favorable or unfavorable evaluative reactions towards something-often rooted in belief and exhibited in feelings and inclinations to act (Neale, 2011). Dhavale, (2011) viewed attitude as a consistency way of behaving or acting towards an object. Brown (2009) described attitude as emotional involvement which includes self, feelings and community relationship. Neale, (2011) defined attitude as particular feelings about something. It therefore involves a tendency to behave in a certain way in situations which involve something whether person, idea or object; it is partially rational and partially emotional and is acquired not inherent in an individual. He added that attitude is a predisposition or readiness to respond in a predetermined manner to relevant stimuli.

### **Concept of Study Strategy**

Mattarima & Hamdam, (2011) define a study strategy as an individual's approach to a task. The author further stated that study strategy includes how a person thinks and acts when planning, executing, and evaluating performance on a task and its outcomes. Much of this thinking about learning is done unconsciously. For example, most of us automatically slow down when reading content that is difficult for us to understand. We also make use of a variety of strategies for helping us organize and remember both key elements of the learning process.

Commander and Smith (1995) defined study strategies as the cognitive activities that affect the academic success of the students at all levels and keep students focused in order to understand and remember the information. Carns and Carns (1991) explained these strategies as individuals' learning styles and choices which improve their cognitive control along with their academic success.

On the other hand, Weinstein and Mayer (1983) define study strategies as behaviours and thoughts in which a learner engages and which are intended to influence the learners encoding process. In this process, students apply different efforts because they have different potentials and different ways of learning. Therefore, understanding the individuals' differences regarding the strategies is crucial since these shape the instruction style of a teacher. Furthermore, comprehending the learning strategies utilized by students can contribute to teachers' efforts in teaching and learning process (Mattarima & Hamdam, 2011). For this reason, finding out which study strategies the students use and stating the relation the strategies have with other constructs can be a step towards better learning and teaching.

### Methodology

A survey research design and ex post facto design was used in this study to examine the influence of study strategy, self-concept and attitude on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria. A survey research design is a procedure in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey or questionnaire to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitude, opinions, behavior or character of the population (Creswell, 2012). The present study is therefore interested in using questionnaire in studying the opinions of colleges of education students regarding their study strategies, self-concept and attitude towards shorthand. Hence a survey design was appropriate for achieving this. While the main focus of interest (i.e., dependent variable) of this study is shorthand achievement and this was obtained from the schools' records. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) stated that, ex post facto design is used when the cause-and-effect relationships are sometimes established. Here, there is no manipulation of the independent variable in the lab or field setting. Since, the dependent variable of this study was obtained without manipulation of the independent variable in the lab or field setting, hence, ex post facto design was appropriate for collecting the data on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria.

The target population comprised 1789 NCE II students of Business Education in Colleges of Education in the North Eastern Nigeria. NCE II students of business education were considered in this study due to the fact that the rate of failure in shorthand is higher among NCE II students compare to NCE I and NCE III (see for example Musa, 2019, Rhoda, 2015). Hence, NCE II students were more appropriate for this study. The sample of this study comprised of 360 NCE II business education students in colleges of education in North-eastern Nigeria. The sample was drawn from Krejcie and Morgan table for determining the sample size because the table provides the generalized scientific guideline for sample size decisions. Even though, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) recommended that 317 students are adequate to represent the entire population of 1789, but the present study increased the sample size to 360 students in order have equal number of students from each college of education in that is, 45 students were drawn from each College of education under investigation. This is in line with Salkind (2013) who suggested that a researcher can increase his/her sample size by up to 40% in order to avoid non-response problem and sample size error.

A Simple random sampling technique was used in the present study because this sampling technique was believed to produce samples which are free from bias (Sambo, 2005). Following this argument, the present study used simple random sampling technique in order to minimize the issue of bias. The procedures followed in drawing the sampled students are as follows: in each college of education, the researcher wrote the

names of all NCE II business education students on pieces of papers which were folded and thoroughly mixed in a container. The researcher then dipped his hand without looking into the container and picked any piece of the paper. The researcher unfolded the paper and the name on the paper was recorded. The paper was refolded and returned to the container for the next draw in order to give all the element of the population equal chance of being included in the sample of the study (Uzoagulu, 2011). Any paper or name drawn once was ignored if it was picked on the subsequent occasions (Uzoagulu, 2011). This process was repeated until the required numbers of 45 students were selected in each college of education.

The measurement of the three variables of this study were adapted from the previous studies (see, for example, Adebule & Aborisade, 2014; Louise, 2013; Madalene, & Armenio, 2015). The three variables include; study strategy (20 items), self-concept (20 items) and attitude (20 items). The measurements of these variables were adapted based on the suggestion of Churchill (1979) that a researcher can adopt or adapt measurement from the existing studies relevant to the present research. In this study, the Likert scale was adopted for all the items of the three variables. This is because five scale is likely to produce better results than scale with no midpoint (Sorrel, 2010). Hence, the respondents were asked to indicate their responses to each question on a five-point likert scale that is, 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. In addition, the main focus of interest (i.e., dependent variable) of this study was students' achievement in shorthand. The students' achievement is the students' exams scores, and it was obtained from existing records of colleges of education under investigation. In addition, the reliabilities of the instruments were assessed and the reliability coefficients of the three are; study strategy (0.73) self-concept (0.82) and attitude (0.88). The results suggested that the instrument is reliable based on the recommendation given by George, Ioana, & Andriana, (2015). According to them reliability coefficient of at least .60 is considered satisfactory and acceptable.

Finally, for cleaning of data and analysis, SPSS 23 was used throughout the process. The predictive power of study strategy, self-concept and attitude (i.e., independent variables) on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education (i.e., dependent variable) was determined using multiple regression. A multiple regression is a statistical technique for testing the influence of a number of independent variables on one continuous dependent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

### **Presentation Results**

In this study, the necessary assumptions of multiple regression were properly assessed and fairly complied. Hair et al. (2013) recommended that when interpreting the result of multiple regression analysis, a researcher should first consider the F value, then the

R-square value or adjusted R square, and follow by the individual contribution. Following their recommendation, in this study, the statistical evidence in table 1 has proved that the model was statistically significant based on the F ratio 58.807,  $p = .000$ . The result also revealed the  $R^2$  value of of .33, indicating that the model fit is large (Murphy, Myors & Wolach, 2014).

Regarding the individual contribution of independent variables, the variables study strategy had a standardized coefficients beta value of .290,  $p = .000$ , self-concept had .411,  $p = .000$  and Attitude had .350,  $p = .000$  (see, table 1). This indicates a significant contribution of the variables in the model, that is, study strategy, self-concept and attitude had a significant positive influence on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria. This result does not support the predictions of null hypothesis that study strategy, self-concept and attitude have no significant influence on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria.

**Table 1:** Regression Analysis on influence of study strategy, self-concept and attitude on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in North-Eastern Nigeria.

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T value	P value	Decision	
<b>Self-concept</b>	.411	2.067	.000	Rejected	
<b>Attitude</b>	.350	3.121	.000	Rejected	
<b>Study strategy</b>	.290	5.393	.000	Rejected	
<b>R. square</b>					.33
<b>Adjusted r square</b>					.32

### Discussion of Result

The findings of this study indicated that study strategy, self-concept and attitude are significant predictors of shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education. This implies that the students with a positive attitude towards shorthand, good self-concept and study strategy in shorthand can perform better in the course. The finding is consistent with John, Abduljaleel, and Emma, (2014) who observed that students' self-concept is perceived positively by students and it directly predicts their academic performance. Similarly, the study conducted by Nalah (2014), revealed that a significant relationship exists between self-concept and academic performance of College of Education students. The finding is consistent with Ulviye, Janneke Gerda, and Rashmi, (2018) who reported that study strategy used by ethnic majority group highly

influenced their academic achievement in Medical Science. In a related study, Anura, Palli, and Kathleen (2014) confirmed that the study strategy affects students' academic performance in management accounting. The finding of the present study also agreed with the study of Tenaw, (2015) in the context of Ethiopia which indicated that students' positive attitude towards chemistry has significantly increased their achievement in chemistry. In another study by Semukono and Arinaitwe (2014) in the context of Turkey, revealed that there is existence of a positive relationship between university students' attitude and achievement in quantitative courses. Similarly, Bassey Umoren and Udida (2013), found that the chemistry achievement of secondary school students is the function of their attitude towards the subject.

### 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The main purpose of this research work is to examine the influence of Students' related factors (study strategy, self-concept and attitude) on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in north eastern Nigeria. The study had achieved all the three objectives discussed in section 1.4. The present study proved empirically that study strategy, self-concept and attitude have significant and positive influence on shorthand achievement of business education students in colleges of education in north eastern Nigeria. Therefore, parents and shorthand lecturers in colleges of education should focus specifically on these students' related factors to reduce the massive and consistent failure recorded among NCE students in Shorthand and this will build confidence in students to take dictation with sufficient speed and accuracy.

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