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Pandemic's Impact on the Students of Office Administration's Shorthand Proficiency

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the Pandemic's impact on the students of Office Administration's shorthand proficiency at Camarines Norte State College (CNSC). Data were gathered through a survey questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale using the descriptive method. Percentage and weighted mean were the statistical tools used to interpret the results. Ninety-five (95) 2nd year and 3rd-year students served as respondents through total population sampling. The results revealed that students are moderately proficient in shorthand writing and ineffective in time management, while rather proficient in shorthand reading and lack of reading materials was the factor. Lastly, proficiency in English grammar and communicating/interacting in a class discussion was the factor. Based on the results, an action plan was formulated as a recommendation, which includes providing innovative devices such as iPads or tablets to facilitate online stenography instruction and study.

Keywords
Grammar Proficiency
Office Administration
Reading Proficiency
Shorthand Proficiency
Writing Proficiency

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Introduction

The pandemic caused by a novel coronavirus has drastically altered the lives of millions of people globally, impacting general human concerns and causing severe financial and political emergencies in the infected nations. Aside from being a threat to the world, it has also

been recognised as a significant cause of disparity and insufficiency of social progression in the academic sector. Many universities and colleges all over the world have turned to online education. While governments, frontline workers, and health officials work hard to contain the outbreak, education systems strive to provide quality education to all students during these trying times. Many students have experienced psychological and emotional distress at home and cannot engage productively. The best practices for online homeschooling are still being researched [1].

While adapting to the new changes, staff and student readiness must be gauged and supported accordingly. Learners with a fixed mindset find it challenging to adapt and adjust, whereas learners with a growth mindset quickly adapt to a new learning environment. There is no one-size-fits-all pedagogy for online learning. There are a variety of subjects with varying needs. Different topics and age groups require different approaches to online learning [2]. For many students, the unaccustomed distance in their education was challenging; for example, Ref. [3] found that students felt uncomfortable using their webcams in synchronous settings. The authors attributed this to the unfamiliar environment where they constantly see themselves; it remains unclear who can see them. Also, students perceived diffuse relationships with their peers and were less likely to experience social support in online learning than in traditional. In addition, many students reported an increased workload; these findings stress the importance of carefully considering students' learning experiences when tackling how to engage them in online learning. Online learning often compares two primary settings: asynchronous and synchronous. They differ in the time and place of teaching and learning activities: Asynchronous environments are temporally and geographically independent, are more individually based and self-paced, and are less instructor-dependent [4].

However, an unexpected health crisis that has affected the education sector has shaken its foundation. As a result, numerous governments worldwide have started a crisis response to lessen the Pandemic's adverse effects on education. This reaction entails, but is not limited to, curriculum updates, the provision of infrastructure and technology resources, adjustments to the academic calendar, and rules for delivering and evaluating education. These changes pushed educational institutions to switch entirely to online learning until face-to-face instruction. Amidst the suspensions, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) declared CHED Memorandum Order No.4 series of 2020 or Guidelines on implementing flexible learning, urging Philippine institutions of higher learning to use distance education methods such as educational technology for student learning.

Meanwhile, In the Bicol region, due to the present health crisis and to support the implementing rules and regulations by CHED and Proclamation No. 922 or Declaring a State

Public Health Emergency throughout the Philippines, Camarines Norte State College (CNSC) declared Administrative Order No.33 series of 2020 prepared by Special Board of Trustees indicating Policies and Guidelines on how to end 2nd Semester S.Y. 2019-2020, Post ECQ operations and Recovery plan— stated here how CNSC implements and shifts to an online and blended mode of learning. This hindered the CNSC community, including students from Bachelor of Science in Office Administration at Camarines Norte State College, as these four (4)-years of study are designed to provide the students with essential knowledge and necessary skills as Office administration students and introduce the principles of Shorthand as a requirement for the student. Provide application and development of writing and reading exercises; presentation and development of English grammar, punctuation and spelling skills as student transcribe in longhand dictate Shorthand with 10-15% error or 40 words per minute (wpm). According to Ref. [5], the sudden and unexpected shift to online learning with insufficient training, inadequate bandwidth, and humble preparation has resulted in poor student experiences that cannot be sustainable.

Moreover, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, Shorthand is one of the major subjects offered by Office Administration. Shorthand, sometimes called Stenography, is a system of writing by sound. The benefits of Shorthand have enhanced its general acceptability and popularity in the business world. Proficiency in Shorthand is "sine qua non" for productive and efficient office work—effective performance of secretarial tasks. Taking notes in Shorthand and accurately transcribing those notes is crucial to a secretary's competence. A secretary who can accurately take dictation and transcribe it is equivalent to a typist. Studying Shorthand is regarded as a "core" subject in a secretarial course. It has the most significant credit load allocation, and students must perform competently to complete it correctly [6].

On the other hand, according to proficiency in Shorthand, students of office administration must be able to read and write shorthand strokes, according to CMO 19, and demonstrate English grammar, punctuation, and spelling skills by transcribing longhand dictated letters at 40 words per minute on practice material in a 3-minute dictation with 10-15% errors.

Furthermore, the shorthand subject in Camarines Norte State College was taken by First-year to third-year Bachelor of Science in Office Administration students. Ref. [7] stated that knowledge of Shorthand is beneficial in corporate offices, courtrooms, government offices, committee meetings, and any other circumstance where a record of the spoken word is required. There are many professions or careers where learning Shorthand is needed or advantageous. These professions include confidential secretaries, stenographers, shorthand typists, parliamentary reporters, verbatim reporters, court reporters, and journalists. This

study's subject was chosen to determine whether office administration students attain shorthand proficiency amidst the Pandemic, given the standards and qualifications of CMO No. 19—series of 2017.

We, the authors of this study, hope to educate people about the conditions of students during these difficult times and to look at various coping strategies to help and motivate them with the current situation, as they should develop speed, accuracy in dictation and transcription and build language skills with an emphasis on spelling, punctuation, grammar, and vocabulary usage—knowledge about the shorthand theories of words and vocabulary used in various documents.

A. Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework presented below served as a basis to support the researchers' study. The Transformative Learning Theory, as supported by Ref. [8], states that it is how individuals reformulate and validate the meaning of their lives due to the sudden shifting of paradigms and changes in the structured process that an individual is accustomed to. Transformative Learning changes how individuals view their actions and thinking due to a sudden change in the environment and how things reflect based on their former roles in their daily lives. Transformative Learning uplifts the idea of mind development and self-reflection.

Concerning the presented study, the proposed theory above was relevant to the present study since educational paradigms shifted since the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic, causing an aggregate of changes to the educational panels, primarily to tertiary education. Blended learning was implemented to get the Academic Year to its continuity of schooling and preserve its quality of instructions and dissemination. In this case, learners/students of Shorthand subjects who suffer difficulty in fully equipping themselves with the knowledge acquired through Transformative Learning Theory and its course of action, it presented an idea wherein the willingness of every learner and the instructor to rise and continue the mode of instructions, as preserving the best output as possible showcasing the quality and excellence of education.

A particular person can experience a disorienting dilemma if the existing structures do not add up to his experiences and accustomed designs; therefore, it can be observed that transformative learning applies only if a person is involved in the possibilities of change and breaks away from the used structures. The students submitted themselves to undergo transformative learning and cope with the adjustments to keep the quality of the education intact and keep up with the subjects' demands of competency and eloquence. Due to the sudden change to digital education brought about by the Pandemic, learners tend to transform and assess themselves through this phase. Sufficient knowledge is crucial to being proficient in a subject through online learning. Transformative Learning uplifts the idea of mind development and self-reflection on how someone looks into it from his point of knowledge experiences.

Transformative learning theory was adapted by the present study to address how learners affect the mode of learning to the Shorthand Proficiency amidst the Pandemic.

B. Conceptual Framework

This study was examined to determine the Pandemic's Impact on Students of Office Administration's Shorthand Proficiency. This figure shows the framework the researcher compiled at the end of the study. In this research, the independent variable refers to the profile of the following respondents regarding the demographic profile: To determine the impact of the Pandemic on the office administration students in terms of Shorthand proficiency in reading, writing, and English grammar; To identify the factors affecting the ability of students of office administration in terms of Shorthand reading, writing, and English grammar. The dependent variable is the viable ways and action plan to enhance the proficiency of Office Administration in Shorthand.

The main objective of this study is to determine the Pandemic's impact on the students of office administration's shorthand proficiency. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following objectives:

1. Know the demographic profile of Bachelor of Science in Office Administration students regarding age, sex, monthly household income, and location.
2. Determine the impact of the Pandemic on the office administration students in terms of Shorthand writing proficiency, Shorthand reading proficiency, English grammar proficiency,
3. Identify the factors affecting the proficiency of students in office administration amidst the pandemic along with Shorthand writing, Shorthand reading and English grammar, and
4. Propose viable ways such action plans to further enhance Office Administration students' proficiency in Shorthand.

Methods

A. Setting

Researchers conducted this study at Camarines Norte State College. Systematically, the researchers collected and analysed all of the data. Using a survey questionnaire document, the researchers gathered data and information. The institution was chosen because it offers a Bachelor of Science in Office Administration program and conducts online courses created in response to the Pandemic. The accumulation and analysis of data for this investigation began on 22 August 2022 and concluded on 22 November 2022.

B. Respondents of the Study

This study's respondents were 95 second- to third-year B.S. in Office Administration students enrolled in the first Academic Year 2022-2023 semester. This study's respondents would not include first-year students who took their shorthand subject during the introduction of face-to-face classes this Academic Year 2022-2023, nor fourth-year students because the shorthand subject is only available to first- to third-year students.

C. Instrumentation

The researchers used a survey questionnaire that consisted of 4 parts to get the appropriate data. Part I was asked to determine the demographic profile of respondents, such as age, sex, monthly household income, and location. Part II was to determine the impact of the Pandemic on the office administration students in terms of shorthand writing, reading, and English Grammar Proficiency. Part III was to identify factors affecting students' proficiency in office administration amidst the Pandemic along with Shorthand writing, reading, and English Grammar. That was the evaluation tool students needed to adjust and appraise their academic performance. Part IV was the tool used to suggest a viable action plan for further enhancing the proficiency of Office Administration students in Shorthand.

The present study has conducted a face-to-face interview survey, where researchers asked a series of questions regarding the impact of the Pandemic on the students of office administration's shorthand proficiency.

D. Data Collection

The researchers used a total population method, a type of purposive sampling where the population of interest is studied. Complete population sampling was done when the target group was small and set apart by an unusual and well-defined characteristic.

To determine the impact of the Pandemic on students of Office Administration's Shorthand proficiency, researchers used a Rating scale of 1-5, where five is Very Proficient (VP), and one is Not Proficient (NP), and for the third part of the questionnaire, researchers will also use a Rating scale of 1-5, where the five is Strongly Agree (SA) and the 1 is Strongly Disagree (SD) for the respondents to choose one answer grounded on what they feel and are comfortable with the factors that most affect them during the Pandemic.

E. Data Analysis Techniques

The researchers will use statistical tools to determine this study's treatment. An answered questionnaire will be gathered and analysed through a table or chart for the presentation of data. For a better understanding of the data presented, the researchers will explore using the percentage technique to determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of their age, sex, monthly household income, and location and weighted mean to assess the impact of a pandemic on the student of office administration shorthand proficiency in terms of

Shorthand writing, reading, and English grammar proficiency, as well as the factors influencing office administration shorthand proficiency during a pandemic; Likert scale was used to distinguish between a scale proper, which emerges from collective responses that are scored along a range, it also measures the attitude, knowledge, perceptions, values and behavioural changes.

Results and Discussion

A. Demographic profile of the respondents

The age range of the respondents is from 18 to 32. 63, or 67%, were 18-20 years old; 31 respondents or 32%, were 21-23 years old; one or 1%, was 24-26 years old; and one or 1%, 27-32 years old, amongst the BSOA respondents. 74, or 78%, are female amongst the respondents, while the minority, twenty-one or 22%, are male.

As to monthly household income, the highest frequency of 43 or 45.26 per cent is 5,001-10,000; second, 10,001-15,000 got a frequency of 25 or 26,32%; Third, 5,000 below got a frequency of 19 or 20%; 15,001-20,000 got the frequency of 5 or 5.26%; while the lowest frequency with 3.16 per cent is 20,001 and above.

Most respondents lived in Rural areas during the Pandemic, with a frequency of 63 or 66 per cent, while the minority are in Urban areas, with a frequency of 32 or 34 per cent.

B. Shorthand Reading Proficiency

Shows that students are proficient in reading brief forms. The respondent from the Second year added that he could easily read short documents through memorisation, and continuing to write quick papers in Shorthand can help him practice shorthand writing during the Pandemic. A study by Ref. [9] findings indicates that reading back shorthand notes is essential for improving shorthand speed and accuracy. Learning, storing, and processing knowledge occurs whenever you see, hear, read, write, repeat, or speak something. The best way to learn is to employ all your senses, including drafting shorthand outlines, reading steno outlines, seeing and correcting them with a red pen, and hearing them once again when you read your Shorthand aloud. Reading back and updating shorthand notes are crucial to improving shorthand writing speed and accuracy.

C. Shorthand Writing Proficiency

This study reveals that students are moderately proficient in writing strokes of the steno brief forms, derivatives, and phrases. A respondent from 2nd year rated himself as somewhat professional in shorthand writing as he used supplemental videos during the Pandemic, which serves as their basis on the guidelines for writing the correct strokes; however, he added that it is not enough to be Very Proficient in writing the strokes in Shorthand.

According to a study by Ref. [10], the outcomes of using supplementary videos are increasing student activity and the efficiency of the teaching process. An important issue is establishing a methodology for embedding video clips in multimedia teaching material to improve learning. Distance learning and college courses, where the students work individually on their projects after class, are especially suitable for testing new methods to enhance students' work.

Table 1. Shorthand Reading Proficiency

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I can easily read brief shorthand forms	3.43	P
I can determine how to read symbols and punctuations in shorthand writings	3.28	MP
I can read shorthand phrases	2.93	MP
I know how to read unique shorthand signs (abbreviations and terminologies)	2.93	MP
I can read shorthand writings at the rate of 40 words per minute	2.49	LP
Average weighted mean	3.08	MP

Remark:
4.30-5.00 Very Proficient (VP) 1.90-2.69 Less Proficient (LP)
3.50-4.29 Proficient (P) 1.00-1.89 Not Proficient (NP)
2.70-3.49 Moderately Proficient

Table 2. Shorthand Writing Proficiency

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I know how to write the correct stroke of words in shorthand writing	3.32	MP
I can transcribe long hands into shorthand at 40 words per minute	2.81	MP
I know the basic shorthand principles and rulings of transcription	3.41	P
I can easily recognise accurate words to be used when transcribing (e.g. two/ toe)	3.43	P
I can write the strokes of the steno brief forms, derivatives, and phrases	3.46	P
I can write the correct combination of brief forms, derivatives, abbreviations, and phrases	3.33	MP
I can take dictation at 100-120 words per minute with 98% accuracy in transcription	2.52	LP
Average weighted mean	3.18	MP

Remark:
4.30-5.00 Very Proficient (VP) 1.90-2.69 Less Proficient (LP)
3.50-4.29 Proficient (P) 1.00-1.89 Not Proficient (NP)
2.70-3.49 Moderately Proficient

D. English Grammar Proficiency

This study also reveals that students are proficient in using appropriate spelling and punctuation. Respondents added that to be skilled in English grammar; they tend to read electronic books (Wattpad, novels, manga) or watch English movies to enhance and acquire new words and enhance their vocabulary. Since they are isolated in their own space, they have much time to watch and read. Based on the study by Ref. [11] assesses students' ability to participate in conversation with correct grammar and vocabulary in formal and informal situations related to practical, social, and professional matters. Discover a significant difference in English proficiency levels in higher education before and during COVID-19. Learning before COVID-19 is more effective than learning during COVID-19 because 50% of their respondents

can converse with correct grammar and vocabulary in formal and informal situations related to practical, social, and professional matters. During a pandemic, it drops to 28%, which implies that teachers and members of the scholarly society in higher education should provide students with an appropriate environment by providing meaningful input and presenting students with interaction to increase the frequency of experiencing English. Students need to learn how to manage their time and academic requirements; they seek additional involvement elsewhere. Logically, they believe more free time equals more opportunities to complete tasks. The solution, however, is more complicated. Students frequently need help completing their assignments in more extended periods due to a lack of structure in their schedules since Shorthand requires time and effort to acquire the specific speed and accuracy given in the CMO 19 Series 2017.

Table 3. English Grammar Proficiency

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
I can determine the correct punctuation in transcribing words during dictation	3.22	MP
I can utilise the proper pronunciation in shorthand writing through subject Ament patterns	3.18	MP
I can use appropriate spelling and punctuation	3.48	P
I can spell correctly the words related to the shorthand subject	3.27	MP
I can use the proper capitalisation of words during transcription	3.37	MP
Average weighted mean	3.30	MP

Remark:
4.30-5.00 Very Proficient (VP)
3.50-4.29 Proficient (P)
2.70-3.49 Moderately Proficient
1.90-2.69 Less Proficient (LP)
1.00-1.89 Not Proficient (NP)

E. Factors that affect Shorthand Reading

Students foresee that lack of instructional reading materials is the most significant factor affecting their shorthand reading proficiency; they tend to buy a book to follow in a class discussion. In connection, the book becomes privileged to have during the Pandemic as the monthly household income of the respondents is between 5,001 and 10,000.

Table 4. The factors that affect shorthand reading proficiency

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Lack of instructional reading materials	3.48	A
Limited exposure in reading practice	3.28	N
Lack of interest in shorthand reading	2.69	N
Not attending class discussions during online learning	2.22	D
Interaction between students and teachers (ex. Internet and power interruptions	3.00	N
Average weighted mean	2.93	N

Remark:
4.30-5.00 Strongly Agree (SA)
3.50-4.29 Agree (A)
2.70-3.49 Neutral (N)
1.90-2.69 Disagree (D)
1.00-1.89 Strongly Disagree (SD)

F. Factors that affect Shorthand Writing

Respondents agreed that ineffective time management could significantly affect their shorthand writing. Respondents also added that shorthand writing requires time and effort, so they sometimes need help managing their time because they use it for household chores. A few respondents cannot practice writing in Shorthand because they are employed and their time is divided. Ineffective time whether instructional materials improve students' knowledge, abilities, and skills, monitor their information assimilation and contribute to their overall development and upbringing. According to Ref. [12], the country's unemployment rate fell to 5.2 per cent in July 2022 from 7.2 per cent in the same period last year. According to the Labor Force Survey, this is the lowest July unemployment rate since 2005. The country's unemployment rate fell to 5.2 per cent in July 2022 from 7.2 per cent in the same period last year. According to the Labor Force Survey, this is the lowest July unemployment rate since 2005.

Table 5. The factors that affect shorthand writing proficiency

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Ineffective time management	3.62	A
Inconsistent attitude in shorthand writing	3.14	N
Lack of writing instructional materials	3.31	N
Lack of interest in shorthand writing	2.73	N
The instructor gives limited shorthand activities	2.79	N
Average weighted mean	3.12	N

Remark:
4.30-5.00 Strongly Agree (SA)
3.50-4.29 Agree (A)
2.70-3.49 Neutral (N)
1.90-2.69 Disagree (D)
1.00-1.89 Strongly Disagree (SD)

G. Factors that affect English grammar proficiency

Using English grammar when communicating/interacting in a class discussion is the most important factor affecting students' English grammar proficiency. Thus, respondents must be more relaxed and competent in using English during class discussions. Speaking encourages college students to communicate in the language they are learning, not only to learn but also to use and apply the language in authentic discourse. However, speaking involves communication, heightening the fear of college students making mistakes when using English.

The study by Ref. [13] resulted in participants mentioning that speaking in English causes anxiety, so they would retreat or avoid such undertakings. Respondents expressed a desire to disengage from communication due to past mistakes and the unsupportive reactions of those around them. Furthermore, students desired to do so to avoid future diction, pronunciation, or grammar errors.

Table 6. The factors that affect English grammar proficiency

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Poor learning approach of both instructor and learner	2.72	N
Unavailability of devices for learning English words	2.78	N
Low self-efficacy in learning English words and phrases regarding shorthand. Ex. Words and phrases	2.58	D
Lack of practice in learning English words	3.18	N
Uses English grammar when communicating/ interacting in a class discussion	3.24	N
Familiarising spelling of vocabulary words and making it a habit	3.20	N
Giving importance to the use of technology. Ex. Electronic dictionary for spelling and English grammar	2.92	N
Average weighted mean	2.94	N

Remark:
4.30-5.00 Strongly Agree (SA)
3.50-4.29 Agree (A)
2.70-3.49 Neutral (N)
1.90-2.69 Disagree (D)
1.00-1.89 Strongly Disagree (SD)

H. Action plan or viable ways

The suggested action plans on the factors affecting Office Administration's Shorthand Proficiency students. First, ineffective time management in writing may be addressed by conducting a seminar/ workshop regarding managing distractions and overcoming procrastination. In this activity, students will learn how to deal with teaching distractions, complete multiple projects, and overcome procrastination. Students must evaluate and understand what they can and cannot control to meet the requirements or skills they must acquire. This activity taught students the knowledge necessary to deal with distractions while learning, complete various tasks, and overcome procrastination. Also, students significantly improved the process of planning continuous control of their time on specific activities. Ref. [14] found that time management training increased the time's perceived power and decreased among undergraduate students.

Moreover, when it comes to reading proficiency, lack of instructional reading materials is the highest factor that affects students. Providing learning materials, especially in Shorthand subjects, may address this factor. In this activity, all students are allowed access to books and other learning materials about stenography. With this, students can access stenography-related books and other instructional reading materials. Ref. [15] found that localised and contextualised learning materials improved students' summative score performance. They drastically enhanced their soft skills, proving that these materials' essence served their ultimate purpose.

The highest factor in English grammar proficiency is using English grammar when communicating/ interacting in a class discussion. This factor may be addressed by implementing rules and policies in using English in Shorthand and English subjects. Through this, the student's skill may be enhanced by using the English language correctly, improving

English grammar and competency. With this, students improved their English grammar proficiency during the discussion and spoke the English language fluently and confidently.

Conclusion

Most of the students of Office Administration at Camarines Norte State College were female because it was a clerical and administrative course that captivated most female students aged 18-20. Regarding monthly household income, most respondents come from a family with a monthly payment of 5,001 – 10,000. The majority of them came from rural areas during the Pandemic, and this was because most of the students in college chose to go to their respective places to avoid getting.

The study revealed that the impact of the Pandemic on the shorthand proficiency of students in Office Administration becomes moderately proficient. Students can write and read strokes of brief steno forms, phrases, and derivatives and use appropriate spelling and punctuation in Shorthand. Based on the data obtained, students revealed that ineffective time management, lack of instructional reading materials, and use of English grammar when communicating/interacting in a class discussion was foreseen as a factor that can affect the Shorthand proficiency of students in Office Administration.

Students are suggested to attend training and workshops related to Shorthand Writing, Shorthand Reading, and English Grammar to meet the required skills and proficiency of Office Administration Students.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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