A SURVEY OF HIRING PROCEDURES AND JOB REQUIREMENTS

FOR BEGINNING CLERICAL WORKERS IN SELECTED

FIRMS IN BELTON AND TEMPLE, TEXAS

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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Business education has an important role to play in the

vocational guidance of youth because of the high proportion

of high school graduates who go into business occupations.

As of 1960, approximately one out of four of the gainfully

employed was engaged in some form of business.[1]

> The largest white-collar occupation is still
> the clerical group. Numbering nearly 10 million
> today, it is expected that this group will grow
> to 14 million by 1975. Almost half again as many
> persons will be earning their livings as clerical
> workers in 1975 as compared with the number doing
> this type of work today.[2]

Every young person, regardless of the size of his school

and community, is entitled to the opportunity of becoming

competent in the vocational and economic fields of today.

Because the levels of work in modern businesses are so varied,

most young people in high school can be prepared for one of

these levels if the school is alert to the local situation and

is prepared to adjust traditional patterns to new needs.[3]

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[1]United Business Education Association, This We Believe
About Business Education in the High School, A Report by the
Policies Commission for Business and Economic Education
(Washington, 1963), p. 3.

[2]Eleanor Maliche, "Changing Patterns in Office Work,"
Business Education Forum, XX (February, 1966), 15.

[3]Hamden L. Forkner, "Characteristics of Business Education
in Our High Schools," The Bulletin of the National Association
of Secondary-School Principals, XLI (January, 1957), 13-14.

The value of an education program lies in its contribution to those for whom it is intended and to the society of which they are a part. Many people do not continue their education beyond high school before seeking full-time employment. Out of every ten students in grade school in the United States, three will not finish high school. Out of the seven who finish high school, three will go to work and four will continue their education. Of the four who continue in school, only two will graduate from college.[4]

Since many high school students will seek immediate full-time or part-time clerical employment upon graduation, business teachers need to be aware of the opportunities available in the community and of the standards students will be expected to meet in their initial positions of employment. Businessmen look to the high school business department for more and better-trained students who are equipped to help operate offices efficiently. Before students can be adequately trained to take their places in the business world, business teachers must know the specific needs of the community. Realistic information about the jobs and industries in a community can contribute much to educational planning. Many schools have conducted community surveys and have set up special educational

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[4]Education for a Changing World of Work: Summary Report of the Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education, Office Education Publication No. 80020 (Washington, 1962), 2-3.

programs to equip students with clerical skills and knowledges required by local firms.

Prior to the 1968-69 school year, Belton High School of Belton, Texas, offered the following business subjects: Typing I, Typing II, bookkeeping, and shorthand. In September of 1968, the school initiated an additional course, the vocational office education program. The steps taken in setting up the program, the federal requirements, the purposes, and the curriculum for the program are covered in Chapter III. The program was designed to prepare senior students in clerical office skills so that they could seek employment upon their graduation from high school.

The students involved in the new program received intensive training on the electric typewriter, duplicating machines, transcribers, adding and calculating machines, and a posting machine; and they received instruction in the subject areas of business mathematics, business English, filing, telephone techniques, job seeking, grooming, and business ethics. Some of the students were employed in the community on a part-time basis; others worked in a school lab.

Because many graduates of Belton High School seek employment in Belton or the nearby city of Temple, the vocational office education teacher realized that a study of office requirements and procedures in the two cities would be helpful in determining whether the training units included in the new

program were practical in relation to the business practices of the community. A knowledge of the type of clerical workers hired, the standards required by local firms, and the different kinds of machines used by the employees would aid significantly in planning the business program.

Belton itself is a small town in Central Texas with a population of approximately 9,000 people. The business area of town includes approximately fifteen major private business firms, the city offices, and the county offices for Bell County. Temple, which is located approximately eight miles from Belton, is a city of approximately 34,000 people. The business area of town covers approximately four square blocks, and a number of firms are located in shopping centers throughout the city.

The Problem and its Purpose

This study was an analysis of the hiring procedures and job requirements for beginning clerical workers in selected firms in Belton and Temple, Texas. The study specifically attempted to determine the minimum employment standards for clerical workers and to determine the procedures used in screening applicants for employment.

The purpose of the study was to compile data to assist in the development of the units to be included in the curriculum for a vocational office education program in Belton High School.

Hypotheses of the Study

It was hypothesized that most firms in Belton and Temple would use methods other than testing in screening applicants for employment. It was further hypothesized that.

1. Training, rather than experience, would be considered essential for employment.

2. Accuracy, rather than speed, would be considered essential in the skill areas such as typing and shorthand.

3. The typewriter would be the machine used most frequently in Belton and Temple firms.

Delimitations

The study was limited to information obtained through personal interviews with employers and personnel directors of fifty selected Belton and Temple firms. The study was limited to a sampling of the various types of business firms in Belton and to a sampling of Temple firms with more than twenty-five employees. The study was further limited to those firms employing clerical workers.

Sources of Data

Background information on office standards for beginning office workers was obtained from business periodicals. Related studies were analyzed as to purpose, procedures, and findings. The data for this study were obtained through personal interviews with personnel directors and employers in Belton and

Temple firms. Manuals for vocational office education programs were also studied to aid in determining the curriculum for the Belton High School vocational office program.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this report:

A beginning worker is one who is just starting to work for a firm. The person may or may not have had previous work experience.

A clerical worker is an employee who does office work in a business firm. The person's job title may be that of typist, clerk, stenographer, secretary, bookkeeper, receptionist, or a combination of the above titles.

An employer is one who is responsible for hiring clerical workers. His title may be that of owner, personnel director, office manager, president, or other titles indicating a position of management.

Gross words a minute (gwam) is the term for the total number of words typed a minute without any deduction for errors.

Net words a minute (nwam) is the term for the number of words typed a minute after a deduction for errors has been made.

VOE is the term used to designate the vocational office education program.

OEA is the term used to designate the Office Education Association for vocational office education students.

Vocational office education student is a senior student enrolled in VOE in either the cooperative or the laboratory program.

Cooperative program is a program in which the students have an hour of VOE class a day and work a minimum of three hours a day in the office of a local business firm.

Laboratory program is a program in which the students have an hour of VOE class a day and spend an additional hour a day in laboratory class. The laboratory class consists of three activities: a continuation of the VOE class training, the provision of typing and duplicating services for teachers, and the experience of working in school offices.

Related Studies

Through library research, several studies were found relating to hiring procedures and standards for beginning clerical workers. Of the related studies reviewed, four were closely related to this study.

In 1960, the business education teachers of the Unified School District of San Francisco, in cooperation with the San Francisco chapter of the National Office Management Association, surveyed thirty-four companies.[5] The study was undertaken to

[5]Charles E. Ginder, "Businessmen Questioned on Amount of Training They Expect Beginning Clerical Workers to Have," Office Executive, XXXV (November, 1960), 54-55.

determine the standards for beginning clerical workers in San Francisco. Over three-fourths of the respondents required at least a high school diploma for all clerical workers. In addition, higher education was required of the senior secretaries, accounting clerks, and senior clerks. For the latter three classifications, half of the firm required a junior college education.

A number of the firms let the employment agency conduct tests for them, and a few firms administered the Wonderlic tests or the Minnesota Clerical Tests themselves. Although nearly all of the firms checked to see whether an applicant had taken business courses in high school, less than half of them checked to see what the grades were.

The majority of responding San Francisco firms required a typing speed of 50 net words a minute on a five-minute test with ten words deducted for each error. Though a few firms listed 90 to 100 words a minute as the minimum shorthand speed, the majority required 80 words a minute. Competency was expected of beginning workers in operating typewriters and transcribing machines, but no training was required on the ten-key and full-key adding machines. Partial training was accepted on the stencil duplicators and on the printing and rotary calculators. Although no tests were given in English and spelling, a proficiency in these areas was listed as a requirement by a majority of the respondents.

A survey of selected manufacturing firms in Dallas, Texas, was conducted by Dodd in 1967 through mail questionnaires.[6] The survey revealed that forty-three of the forty-eight firms required a high school education, and only twelve required previous office experience. In determining an applicant's abilities, thirty-three firms administered tests themselves, nineteen accepted test scores from employment agencies, ten checked the high school grades, forty considered recommendations, and nineteen accepted information supplied by the applicant.

About 48 per cent of the firms required applicants to be able to operate office machines, and 13 per cent required a knowledge of bookkeeping. The typing speed required varied from 35 to 85 gross words a minute, and the shorthand speed required ranged from 60 to 120 words a minute. Forty-four of the forty-eight firms reported that electric typewriters were used by some or all of their office workers. The desirable attitude and personality traits listed by the greatest number of firms were grooming, ability to get along with co-workers, accuracy, stability, initiative, responsibility, cooperation, punctuality, adaptability, and willingness to learn.

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[6]Diane B. Dodd, "A Comparison of Employment Standards for Beginning Typists, Stenographers, and Secretaries in Selected Manufacturing Firms in the Dallas Area," unpublished research paper, Department of Business Education, School of Business, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1967, pp. 39-42.

A survey was conducted by Conway in 1964 to study the opportunities and requirements for beginning office workers in Schenectady, New York.[7] The purpose of the study was to aid in the revision of the curriculum of Notre Dame High School. A secondary purpose was to establish a link between the school and the business community.

Over half of the firms surveyed employed between one and fifty employees. Approximately one-fourth had between 50 and 100 employees, and the remainder had over 100 employees. The total number of firms surveyed was eighty-six. Pre-employment tests were administered by sixty-two firms, and performance tests were used by forty-three of those firms. Electric adding machines were used by 92 per cent of the firms, and electric calculators were used by 78 per cent. However, more manual typewriters than electric typewriters were used by the responding firms.

Rather than asking for desirable traits in an office worker, the study asked for areas of complaint. In the area of personal qualities, the businessmen listed complaints as a lack of common sense and judgment and a lack of enthusiasm,

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[7]Sister Saint Catherine Denise Conway, "A Study of Beginning Office Employment Opportunities and Requisites in Selected Business Offices of Schenectady, New York, with Implications for Curriculum Revision at Notre Dame High School, 1964," unpublished master's thesis, Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C., 1965.

resourcefulness, and dependability. Complaints listed in the area of performance were poor spelling, grammar, and punctuation; poor ability to compose letters; poor typewriting speed; poor ability to answer the telephone; and poor ability to follow directions.

Glessner's study in 1965 was a survey of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, business firms to determine clerical opportunities for high school graduates.[8] The survey included 10 firms with more than 25 employees and 101 firms with less than 25 employees. Three-fourths of the respondents stated that a high school education was adequate training for clerical workers, but the majority desired that their employees have previous experience.

The most widely owned office machine was the typewriter. Adding machines, dictating machines, and calculators followed the typewriter in frequency of use.

The majority of the respondents preferred an accurate worker to a fast one. The firms interviewed recommended that business teachers instruct their students in the areas of business letter composition, alphabetic filing, and office machines. The machines mentioned were manual and electric typewriters, adding machines, calculators, and transcribing machines.

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[8]Faye Renner Glessner, "A Survey of Selected Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Business Firms to Determine Office Job Opportunities for High School Graduates," unpublished master's thesis, State College of Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa, 1966.

Opportunities for a high school student applying for a clerical position are summarized by Perry in the following statement:

> Job opportunities at the beginning office and clerical level seem to be numerous and increasing in number. Employment requirements, while selective as to basic intelligence and quite flexible even in the skill areas, are certainly not impossible to satisfy by those with a reasonably good command of the English language and with the ability to use numbers in the reasoning process. Clerical skill and previous experience, however, will improve an applicant's chance of securing employment. The company wants the employee with sufficient intelligence and innate ability to learn, adjust, or adapt.[9]

Procedures

A pilot study was conducted in June of 1968. The findings of the pilot study are presented in Chapter II. The present study was conducted during the 1968-69 school year, including the months of September through April. Besides the ten Belton firms included in the pilot study, twenty-five additional private business firms in Belton, Texas, were included in this study. A list of the Belton firms was secured with the cooperation of the Retail Merchants Association. Since the present study was to include twenty-five Belton firms, a like number of Temple firms was included. A list of companies employing twenty-five or more employees

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[9]Richard S. Perry, "Standards and Related Factors Pertaining to Beginning Office and Technical Positions at Lockheed, California," Business Education Forum, XVII (May, 1963), 10.

was secured from the Temple Chamber of Commerce. A number was assigned to each firm, and a table of random numbers was used to select the twenty-five companies to be surveyed.

Library research was done to provide a background of knowledge about the subject. The Texas Education Agency manuals for vocational office education programs and Office Education Association activities were studied for additional material.

A personal interview with employers was selected as the best way to obtain data for this study. The questionnaire used for the pilot study was also used for this study. The questionnaire had been presented in B. A. 545, a summer graduate research course at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas. On the basis of the suggestions received there, the questionnaire was then revised before being used.

The interviews were arranged by telephone, and the nature of the study was explained to the participating businessmen. The interviews were conducted at times convenient to the businessmen, at which time the interviewer further explained the nature and purpose of the study and of the vocational office education program.

After the data received from the interviews were compiled and analyzed, the findings were summarized. On the basis of the findings of the study, recommendations were made.

Treatment of Data

In Chapter II, the results of the pilot study are presented. The description of the vocational office education program of Belton High School is presented in Chapter III, and the results of the Belton and Temple survey conducted during 1968 and 1969 are presented in Chapter IV. In Chapter II and Chapter IV, the information is arranged in the following groups: classifications of clerical workers, sources of applicants, general employment requirements, standards of employment and testing, use of part-time employees, and characteristics considered most desirable in clerical workers.

A summary of the findings, the conclusions drawn, and recommendations made are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted during the first summer
term of 1968 at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas.
The survey was conducted in partial fulfillment of the require-
ments of B. A. 545, a graduate research course. In this study,
an analysis was made of the hiring procedures and job require-
ments for beginning clerical workers in selected firms in
Belton, Texas. The study specifically attempted to determine
the minimum employment standards for clerical workers and the
procedures used in screening applicants for employment. The
purpose of the study was to compile data to assist in the
development of the units to be included in the curriculum
for a vocational office education program in Belton High
School.

Delimitations

The pilot study was limited to information obtained
through personal interviews with employers of ten selected
Belton firms. Due to the limitation of time, the study was
limited to a sampling of the various types of business firms.
The study was further limited to those firms employing clerical
workers.

Procedures

Because the study was limited to a period of six weeks, only ten representative firms were selected from the major business firms in Belton. The study involved a judgment sampling of the various types of firms, including a bank, a savings and loan association, an insurance firm, a law firm, a school tax office, a utility company, a department store, an office equipment manufacturing company, an agricultural equipment manufacturing company, and a credit bureau.

A personal interview with employers and personnel managers was selected as the best way to obtain data for this study. After a questionnaire was devised to collect the information needed for this study, the questionnaire was presented in B. A. 545 at North Texas State University. On the basis of the suggestions received, the questionnaire was then revised.

The interviews were arranged by telephone, and the nature of the study was explained to the participating businessmen. The interviews were conducted during the month of June, 1968, at times convenient to the businessmen. At the time of the appointments, the interviewer further explained the nature and purpose of the study and of the vocational office education program.

After the data received from the interviews were compiled and analyzed, the findings were summarized. On the basis of the findings of the study, recommendations were made.

Findings of the Pilot Study

All ten of the surveyed firms were highly cooperative
in supplying the requested information. The data received
from the interviews were grouped into the following categories:
classifications of clerical workers, sources of applicants,
general employment requirements, standards of employment and
testing, use of part-time employees, and characteristics
considered most desirable in clerical workers.

Classifications of Clerical Workers

The number of full-time clerical workers employed by the
firms surveyed ranged from one to sixteen. One firm employed
sixteen clerical workers, one had fourteen, one had nine,
three had three, one had two, and two employed one such worker.

The firms surveyed were asked to list the different
classifications of clerical workers employed in their offices.
The type of clerical worker employed by the most firms was
the bookkeeper, which was listed by five of the ten firms
surveyed. The job titles listed by three firms each were
clerk-typist and secretary. Two firms listed a combination
receptionist and clerk-typist, a combination cashier and
clerk-typist, a clerk-stenographer, and an executive secretary.
The other job titles, listed by only one firm each, included
receptionist, receptionist-secretary, clerk-bookkeeper,
bookkeeper-teller, teller, duplicating clerk, key-punch

operator, and reporter. Some of the foregoing job classifications could have been combined, but they were kept separate so that the job titles would provide an indication of the duties of the various workers.

Of the fifty-two clerical workers employed by the ten firms, thirteen were bookkeepers, seven were tellers, six were clerk-typists, five were secretaries, four were combination cashiers and clerk-typists, and four were clerk-stenographers. The other job titles were held by only one or two workers. Each job title, the number of firms using the title, and the total number of employees in the ten firms having the title are listed in Table I.

TABLE I

JOB CLASSIFICATION OF CLERICAL WORKERS OF SELECTED
BELTON, TEXAS, BUSINESS FIRMS IN JUNE, 1968

Job Title	No. of Firms Using Job Title	No. of Employees Having Job Title
Bookkeeper	5	13
Clerk-Typist	3	6
Secretary	3	5
Clerk-Stenographer	2	4
Clerk-Typist and Cashier	2	4
Receptionist and Clerk-Typist	2	2
Executive Secretary	2	2
Teller	1	7
Key-Punch Operator	1	2
Bookkeeper-Teller	1	2
Receptionist	1	1
Receptionist-Secretary	1	1
Clerk-Bookkeeper	1	1
Duplicating Clerk	1	1
Reporter	1	1

Sources of Applicants

The firms surveyed were asked from what source they obtained most of their applicants for clerical employment. Of the ten firms, six obtained their applicants mainly through the public schools, and six kept a file of past applicants to consider when an opening occurred. Four firms accepted recommendations from present employees, and one of those four firms checked with similar firms in town to see whether the others had a good applicant but no opening. One firm had previously used the public employment agency and newspaper advertising but now used the public schools and recommendations of present employees. Only one firm occasionally used a private employment agency. Several of the ten firms frequently used more than one source in seeking clerical workers.

General Employment Requirements

The general employment requirements included minimum education and previous experience required by the firms.

Minimum Education.--Of the ten firms surveyed, all ten listed at least a high school education as the minimum education requirement. One firm added that a person would be employed if he could complete his high school education within six months. Another firm required two years of college education for a bookkeeper and a high school education for all other employees.

Previous Experience.--When asked whether previous experience was necessary for the beginning office workers, ten firms replied that it was not required of the general office workers, but two added that such experience was preferred. One firm required that only the secretaries have previous experience, and one firm preferred that its bookkeepers have some prior work experience.

Standards of Employment and Testing

The participating Belton firms were asked to disclose how they determined the abilities of applicants and what the standards for the different positions were.

Method of determining Abilities.--Of the ten firms surveyed, seven considered recommendations from previous employers if the applicant had worked before. Six accepted the grades of the applicant and talked to the principal or business teacher for an over-all impression of the applicant. Three firms administered tests, one used test scores obtained by an employment agency, and one considered the impression made by the applicant during the interview in addition to considering the applicant's grades or previous employer's recommendation.

Typewriting.--Two Belton firms administered a five-minute typing test to determine the abilities of applicants. One did not have a maximum number of errors allowed; the other allowed one error but preferred none. Neither firm deducted

any words per error in determining the applicant's score. One firm used a manual typewriter for the test; the other used an electric typewriter.

When asked to specify minimum typing speeds, one firm indicated that the clerk-cashiers were required to type 60 gross words a minute. The second firm required all employees except the bookkeepers to be able to type 50 words a minute. The other employees of the firm included a receptionist, clerk-typists, clerk-stenographers, and secretaries. The remaining eight firms replied that they had no minimum speed requirement and that they considered accuracy more important than speed. Several employers added that since they had considered the recommendation of the business teachers, they did not feel that a minimum score was necessary.

Of the ten firms surveyed, two had only manual type-writers, three had only electric, and four had both manual and electric typewriters. One of the four firms with both types also had a Selectric typewriter. The remaining firm used manuals only for fill-ins with all other typewriters being electric, including one Selectric.

Shorthand.--When asked whether employees were required to be able to take shorthand, four firms answered yes, and six answered no. Of the six firms not requiring shorthand, two preferred it, and one had paid for an employee to take a course in shorthand at a local college. Of the four firms

requiring shorthand, two required it of clerk-stenographers and secretaries; one required it of clerk-cashiers; and one required it of executive secretaries, clerk-typists, and combination receptionists and clerk-typists.

Of the four firms requiring shorthand, two administered a test, and two did not. One firm gave a three-minute test, and the other gave a five-minute test; both firms used tests that consisted of letter dictation. Both firms graded on grammar, spelling, and format; but neither firm had a specific number of errors allowed on the test. One firm had no minimum speed requirement and felt that accuracy was more important. The other had a specific minimum only for executive secretaries, who were expected to take dictation at a minimum of 100 words a minute. The two firms that did not administer shorthand tests had no minimum speed requirements and considered accuracy more important than speed. One of the firms requiring shorthand at the time of the interview was considering buying a dictating-transcribing unit instead of continuing to utilize shorthand.

Office machines.--When asked whether beginning office workers should be able to operate office machines in addition to typewriters, all ten firms answered no, but three added that they preferred a knowledge of the machines. Several indicated that they did not require applicants to have some acquaintance with certain office machines only because most

applicants who had not worked previously had not received such training in school.

Typewriters were used in the firms of all ten respondents. The office machines other than typewriters used most frequently by the ten Belton business firms surveyed were printing calculators, copiers, and posting machines, which were each used by six firms. Full-key adding machines were used by five firms, and ten-key adding machines were used by four firms. The mimeograph machine was used by three firms; and the transcribing machine, check signer, and postage meter were used by two firms. Machines used by only one firm included the rotary calculator, spirit duplicator, proof machine, printing machine, card sorter, card verifier, card punch, electric mail opener, addressing machine, and offset printing press. No firm reported using a key-driven calculator.

In the number of machines used of any one type, the full-key machine ranked first with seventeen machines, the printing calculator was second with fifteen machines, and the ten-key adding machine was third with thirteen machines. The firms used a total of nine posting machines and seven copying machines. All other categories had a total of three or fewer machines. The types of machines listed, the number of firms using each type, and the total number of each type of machine used by the ten firms combined are indicated in Table II.

TABLE II

OFFICE MACHINES USED BY TEN SELECTED BELTON,
TEXAS, BUSINESS FIRMS IN JUNE, 1968

Type of Machine	No. of Firms Using Machines	Total No. of Machines Used by Ten Firms
Printing Calculator	6	15
Copier	6	7
Posting Machine	6	9
Full-Key Adding Machine	5	17
Ten-Key Adding Machine	4	13
Mimeograph Machine	3	3
Transcribing Machine	2	2
Check Signer	2	2
Postage Meter	2	2
Card Punch	1	3
Rotary Calculator	1	1
Spirit Duplicator	1	1
Proof Machine	1	1
Card Sorter	1	1
Card Verifier	1	1
Electric Mail Opener	1	1
Addressing Machine	1	1
Offset Printing Press	1	1

Bookkeeper.--Seven firms did not require a knowledge of
bookkeeping, but three of these firms did prefer such knowl-
edge obtained either through experience or through a formal
course in bookkeeping. The other three firms did require
a knowledge of the subject. One firm required it of only
the bookkeeper, one required it of all clerical employees,
and one required it of the clerk-stenographer.

General tests.--Two of the ten business firms administered
their own intelligence and aptitude tests. One of these firms

used the <u>SRA</u> <u>Short</u> <u>Tests</u> <u>of</u> <u>Clerical</u> <u>Ability</u>.[1] The sections included were business vocabulary, filing, mathematics, coding, checking, and the verbal form, covering general vocabulary and mathematics. The personnel director stated that the person with the highest score did not necessarily get the job that was open. If an opening called for routine, repetitive work, the application of the person with a high score was filed for future consideration in case a more demanding position became available.

The second firm administered a mimeographed test that included general vocabulary, mathematics, and reasoning ability. The owner of this firm also stated that the person with the highest score did not get the job because the nature of the clerical work of this firm was mostly routine. In scoring the tests, for example, the owner considered 21 to 25 as good, 26 to 28 as excellent, and 29 to 30 as too high. She added that people scoring high on the test would not be satisfied doing the repetitive work demanded by her firm.

<u>Use</u> <u>of</u> <u>Part-time</u> <u>Employees</u>

At the time of the interviews, four firms employed part-time clerical workers. Two of these firms employed two part-time workers, and two employed one. The other six firms had no part-time employees at the time. Of the six firms, however, two planned to hire a part-time employee in September,

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[1]Jean Maier Palormo, <u>Short</u> <u>Tests</u> <u>of</u> <u>Clerical</u> <u>Ability</u> (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1959).

one had used part-time help in the past for summer vacation relief, two had used summer help and distributive education students in the past, and three agreed to use a vocational office education student beginning in September of 1968. The positions held by part-time employees with the firms included bookkeepers, clerk-stenographers, clerk-typists, IBM card sorters, and clerk-receptionists.

One firm planning to hire a part-time worker in September preferred to hire an adult so that they would have two trained adult employees in the event that one needed to resign. A second firm sometimes used an adult ex-employee for summer vacation relief. The other firms that had used part-time help or planned to in the future all utilized student help.

When asked whether they would consider hiring a high school vocational office education student as a part-time worker, all ten firms replied that they would. Seven stated that they would hire a student if they had a need for a worker at the time, and three firms agreed to hire a VOE student beginning in September of 1968.

Characteristics Considered Most Desirable in a Clerical Worker

Each employer interviewed was asked to list five of the characteristics he considered most desirable in a clerical worker. The traits were not ranked since the people interviewed named the traits as they came to mind and did not list and then rank the traits.

The three traits listed most often were neatness or good grooming, listed by seven firms; ability, listed by seven; and ability to get along with others, listed by six. Dependability and honesty were each listed by four persons, and pleasing personality and attitude were listed by three. Ability and desire to learn, willingness to work, ability to meet the public well, efficiency, and character were each listed by two persons. The following traits were each listed by one person: ability to keep work confidential, desire to do a good job, sincerity, courtesy, ability to work well under supervisors, and ability to stay with a project until it is finished.

Results of the Pilot Study

A report of the pilot study was presented to the Belton superintendent of schools in July of 1968. The 44-page report included the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. Portions of the report were used in setting up the new vocational office education program in Belton High School.

Purchase of Equipment

One of the recommendations of the pilot study was that students in Belton High School should receive training on electric typewriters. Of the ten firms surveyed, all ten owned typewriters. Two firms owned only manual typewriters, three had only electric, four had both manual and electric,

and one used manuals only as fill-in machines. Two of the ten firms also owned a Selectric typewriter. Eight of the ten firms surveyed used electric typewriters for part or all of their clerical workers. The new office education program was authorized to purchase ten electric typewriters, three of which would be Selectrics.

Ordinarily, only schools in metropolitan areas are authorized to purchase posting machines under the federal plan for vocational office education. One of the recommendations of the report on the pilot study was that Belton students should be given training on posting machines. Because the pilot study showed that a high percentage of Belton firms used posting machines, Belton High School was authorized to include such a machine in its new program.

The report also recommended that Belton High School should offer training on printing calculators and adding machines. In September of 1968, the school purchased two printing calculators and one ten-key adding machine for the vocational office education program. Because the survey showed that only one of the ten firms owned a rotary calculator, the school did not include such a machine in the new program.

Curriculum Guide

On the basis of statements made by the employers interviewed, the report recommended that sections on grooming and business ethics should be included in business courses in the

high school. During the first few weeks of the 1968 school year, the teacher of the vocational office education course conducted a unit outlining the qualities necessary for a successful office worker. These qualities included good grooming, necessary abilities, and desirable personal characteristics. A record set was also used to portray different situations involving business ethics. The list of traits considered most desirable by the persons interviewed was also stressed during the unit.

Employment of Students

Of the ten firms surveyed, three agreed to hire a vocational office education student in the fall of 1968. By the end of September, however, five of the ten firms had hired a total of six students for part-time clerical help, and a sixth firm had pledged to hire a student in January of 1969.

The survey also helped to establish contact between the teacher and the business community. Shortly after the survey was completed, a Belton businessman called the teacher and asked for a student in the VOE program to work for him on a part-time basis; he stated that he had learned about the program from one of the ten businessmen interviewed for the pilot study. The survey, therefore, introduced the teacher to businessmen who might be interested themselves or who might be able to interest other businessmen in participating as employers in the vocational office education program of Belton High School.

CHAPTER III

VOCATIONAL OFFICE EDUCATION IN BELTON HIGH SCHOOL

In December of 1963, vocational office education became
eligible for federal assistance under the provisions of the
Vocational Education Act of 1963.[1] The provision of federal
aid for furniture, equipment, and teachers' salaries made
possible vocational office training that had been economically
unattainable before.

The importance of vocational office training is shown
by the fact that one year after high school graduation, 70
per cent of the young women and over 10 per cent of the young
men are employed in office occupations.[2] By 1968, only five
years after the 1963 act, the VOE program was the second
largest of the vocational education programs. There were
approximately two million people in office education in the
United States in 1968.[3]

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[1] "The Vocational Act of 1963 and Suggested Lines of Action
Relating to Vocational Education for Business and Office Occu-
pations," a special report by the Policies Commission for Busi-
ness and Economic Education, Business Education Forum, XVIII
(January, 1964), 30-31.

[2] Louise Price, Area Supervisor, VOE, Denton, Texas,
"Developing a Vocational Office Education Unit," printed
materials distributed in VOE workshop in Denton, Texas, 1968,
p. 2.

[3] Everett W. Fuller, Director, VOE, Texas, material pre-
pared for the Fourth Annual Vocational Office Education
Teacher-Training Conference, Houston, Texas, 1968, p. 2.

Ν The VOE program is a combination of courses and practical experiences organized into programs of instruction "to provide opportunities for persons to prepare for and achieve career objectives in office occupations."[4] "The over-all purpose of education for office occupations is to provide individuals with skills and abilities to meet local, state, and national needs for office workers."[5]

"Office occupations laboratories are innovative approaches to the world of office work."[6] Going beyond the traditional educational methods, such classrooms seek to shorten the bridge between school and work. The VOE class was conceived as a finishing course in office work.

> The VOE program is designed to prepare students for employment in clerical office work, including the areas of general clerical, bookkeeping, and stenographic skills. Training will be given in operation of the various office machines, such as duplicating, adding and calculating, posting, and transcribing machines. Subject areas will include business English, business math, record keeping, filing, personality development, grooming, clerical typing, and job application. VOE--2 credits.[7]

Organization of Belton VOE

Prior to the 1968-69 school year, Belton High School, located in Belton, Texas, had offered the following commercial subjects: shorthand, bookkeeping, Typing I, and Typing II.

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[4]Ibid., p. 3   [5]Ibid., p. 2.

[6]Arnold Jacobson and Bruno Zachary, "Office Occupations Laboratory," The Balance Sheet, L (January, 1969), 209.

[7]Handbook, Belton High School, Belton, Texas, 1968, p. 13.

In the spring of 1968, the school was approved and funded for a vocational office education program. A teacher was hired early in June, and plans were made and purchases arranged during the summer months.

"The model office must create the office atmosphere in fact as well as in the mind of the student."[8] Furniture and equipment purchased, therefore, were representative of the furnishings found in the Belton-Temple business community. All office furniture purchased was manufactured in a Belton manufacturing plant. The furnishings included an L-shaped office manager's desk for the teacher, a receptionist's desk to be placed near the entrance to the room, and eighteen typing desks for the students. Two large tables were built along one wall of the room, one for the two duplicating machines and one for the three adding and calculating machines. Two padded swivel chairs were chosen for the office manager's and receptionist's desks. The students' desks had eighteen plastic swivel chairs, and the work tables had six straight plastic chairs.

The VOE room was a converted classroom which already had a large storage cabinet for small supplies. A large storage unit was also designed by the teacher to hold daily work and textbooks. The top half of the cabinet consisted of forty-five letter-size slots, five across and nine down. Each slot was labeled with a student's name and became the place where

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[8]Jacobson and Zachary, op. cit., p. 209.

her folder and daily work was kept. The bottom half of the cabinet consisted of large shelves with cabinet doors; this section was used to store workbooks and textbooks.

The equipment purchased included ten electric typewriters, three of which were Selectrics; four transcribing machines, one of which was a combination dictating-transcribing unit; one mimeograph machine; one spirit duplicator; one ten-key adding machine; two printing calculators; and one posting machine. Usually, only schools located in a metropolitan area are allowed to purchase a posting machine for a VOE program. However, because the community survey conducted by the Belton VOE teacher in the summer of 1968 indicated that a large number of Belton and Temple firms owned posting machines, Belton High School was approved for the purchase of this type of machine.

The converted classroom had a strip of electrical outlets at table height across one side of the room. The machine tables were built along this wall. For the operation of the type-writers and transcribers, strips of outlets were placed across the length of the room on the floor on opposite sides of the room. The desks and machines were arranged into "departments," including the Typing Department, Transcribing Department, Filing and Duplicating Department, and Calculating Department. The office manager's desk was located in the center of the floor toward the back of the room. From this point, the

teacher had an over-all view of all activities in the room
and had easy accessibility to all departments.

Selection of Students for 1968-69

For the first year of VOE, all students who signed up to
take the course were allowed to enter VOE if they had com-
pleted one year of typewriting and would be seniors the
following year. The principal spoke to the junior students
in the spring of 1968 and explained the new program. During
August, the VOE teacher met with the students and further
explained the program. The teacher-coordinator spent the
months of August and September seeking part-time office jobs
for the students.

In September, the students were given clerical aptitude
tests and typing tests to determine their abilities. The
clerical aptitude tests were mimeographed tests used by a
local business firm and included general vocabulary, mathematics,
and reasoning ability. The teacher then tried to match the
ability of the student to the requirements of the job. During
the 1968-69 school year, fourteen students were in the coop-
erative work program and worked three or more hours a day in
a Belton or Temple business firm. Ten students were in the
laboratory program and spent an hour a day in further VOE
training or in working in a school office for practical exper-
ience. All students in both programs were in the VOE class
an hour a day and received the same basic instruction.

Publicity for the New Program

The first contact between the new VOE program and the Belton business community was the pilot study conducted by the VOE teacher in June of 1968. At that time, the teacher explained the new program to the employers of the ten selected firms. In order to introduce the new program to a larger number of Belton businessmen, the VOE teacher spoke to the two Belton service clubs, the Lions Club and the Rotary Club, in September of 1968. At a luncheon meeting of each of the two clubs, the teacher spoke about the purposes, set-up, and operation of the VOE program. The businessmen received the program enthusiastically and offered to help in any way they could. Throughout the 1968-69 school year, some of them offered advice in setting up the program, some offered to conduct tours of their plants for the VOE classes, and others provided part-time jobs for students enrolled in the program.

The local newspaper, the Belton Journal, was also very cooperative in publicizing the new program. The paper published a number of stories explaining the program at the beginning of the year and describing its activities throughout the year.

Curriculum of the VOE Program

The class experience for both the cooperative work program and the laboratory program was basically the same.

Several weeks were spent in lecture and problem solving, but
the majority of time was spent in an atmosphere of an office
at work. The classroom was divided into departments, and
each student spent approximately six weeks in each department.

At the beginning of the year, the teacher opened the
class with a unit concerning job application and grooming,
since most of the students would have to be interviewed for
a part-time clerical position as part of the VOE program.
Qualities emphasized during this unit included the items
listed by Belton employers in the pilot study conducted during
the summer.[9] During the next four six-weeks periods, the
classes were on a rotation schedule. Most of the days were
spent on jobs on the various machines, with occasional days
devoted to business mathematics problems, business English
worksheets, or business ethics records and problems.

Before beginning the first rotation unit, the teacher
explained and demonstrated each of the machines to the entire
class. Then she started the groups on their particular
machines. The students who held part-time jobs were started
on machines that they would be expected to use early on their
jobs. After the students had learned the basic operations of
the machines, they were given lists of all the jobs they were

[9]Gayle R. Crain, "A Survey of Hiring Procedures and Job
Requirements for Beginning Clerical Workers in Selected Firms
in Belton, Texas," unpublished research paper, Department of
Business Education, School of Business Administration, North
Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1968.

to complete on each of the machines. The students checked
the list for each day's jobs and then recorded their scores
when the graded papers were returned.

From that point, there was more of an employer-employee
relationship than of a teacher-student relationship. During
a rotation period, the students came to class each day, set
up their machines and materials, and began work. The teacher,
functioning as the office manager, coordinated activities
and helped with individual problems. After being tested at
the end of the rotation, the students helped the teacher in
showing the next group of students how to operate the machines.
Since the entire class had seen the teacher demonstrate all
machines earlier, the familiarization period took only one
or two class periods each six weeks. On each rotation,
the students' assignments involved less training and more
doing as they progressed until they were ready to begin
work on a new machine.

The materials selected for class use on machines were
practical and realistic rather than repetitive. Instead of
simply performing the basic operations on the calculator,
for example, the students figured payroll sheets, mark-up
on merchandise, and discounts. Instead of copying letters
from a typing book, the students in the typing rotation
received information and composed their own letters in
response. Students in the duplicating section often typed
and duplicated materials for teachers in other departments

of the school and, therefore, were doing actual work rather than "busy" work.

The last six weeks period included a review of business mathematics and business English, a brief research paper, and a brief review unit on job application. During the last unit, each student was required to turn in a complete personal data sheet to be retained in the teacher's permanent files for future reference and job recommendations. At the end of the term, school regulations required only those students with an average of less than 85 per cent to take the comprehensive final examination.

The VOE program should equip students with salable skills, both intellectual and manipulative, and should give them a "base of occupational experience that will add relevance and adaptability to their vocational goal achievement."[10] The VOE teacher must be sensitive to the performance standards of employers and, correspondingly, to the students' needs for job placement. Curriculum development, therefore, is an endless line of planning, application, evaluation, revision, application, evaluation, and so on. The Belton VOE teacher, therefore, planned to do further study in business education workshops and to revise the VOE curriculum whenever more efficient teaching methods or materials were found.

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[10]Gordon I. Swanson, Howard F. Nelson, and Warren G. Meyer, "A Conceptual Framework," American Vocational Journal, XLIV (March, 1969), 24.

Office Education Association Activities

Every VOE student in Belton High School automatically becomes a member of the Office Education Association on the local, state, and national levels. The Belton High School VOE students had a number of OEA activities during the 1968-69 school year. At Christmas, the students held an open house in the VOE room and invited employers, faculty members, and administrators. Coffee and homemade cookies were served to over sixty guests. As a Christmas project, the students collected canned foods, clothing, toys, and a Christmas tree. These items were taken by the students to a low-income Belton family with eight children.

In January, the OEA published a student directory, which contained the name, address, and phone number of every student in school. The directories also contained original cartoons depicting various groups in schools.

In February, the OEA sold original, personalized valentine cards to students, faculty members, and administrators. Also in February, the association held the first annual employer appreciation banquet. Fifty-two people were present, including the students, their employers, and school administrators. The VOE coordinator introduced special guests and then introduced each student, who in turn introduced her employer. A charm was presented to Miss OEA and to the first and second runners-up. The students had voted earlier in the month for Miss OEA on the basis of ability, attitude,

personality, and performance at school and on the job. The
identity of the three finalists was kept secret until the
night of the banquet.

An Area VOE Contest was held in Houston on February 28
and March 1, 1969. The teacher, seven students, and one
parent attended. The students entered the areas of tran-
scribing, business math, record keeping, spelling, ten-key
adding machines, and job application. The student entered
in the job application contest was rated first in her section
during the first round of tryouts. In the finals, she placed
seventh out of forty contestants.

Selection of Students for 1969-70

Curriculum planners should "thoroughly investigate the
nature and qualifications of those for whom the instruction
is planned. The student must be able to react and respond at
an acceptable level to the instruction provided."[11] The VOE
teacher, therefore, carefully screened the fifty-one applicants
for the 1969-70 school year to be sure that they could benefit
from the VOE curriculum.

In the spring of 1969, the VOE teacher held a meeting of
all junior students interested in signing up for the VOE course
during the next school year. She explained the nature of the
program and the requirements for enrollment. Students were

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[11]G. L. O'Kelley, Jr., "Curriculum Planning, a Consuming
Demand," _American Vocational Journal_, XLIV (March, 1969), 31.

asked to fill out and return application blanks for admittance

to the program. At the bottom of the form was the following

statement:[12]

> If you enter the VOE program, will you do your
> very best to be present in class and at work, to do
> all work to the best of your ability, to maintain an
> acceptable personal appearance, and to represent the
> program well at all times at school, at work, and in
> the community?

The statement was followed by a blank in which the students

were to answer yes or no and a blank for the students'

signature.

The VOE coordinator took the names of the fifty-one

interested students and checked them as to ability, attendance,

attitude, and appearance. Of the applicants, forty-one were

accepted into the program. The ten students who were not

accepted had either extremely poor attendance records, ex-

tremely poor attitudes toward school work, or an occupational

intent other than the field of business.

In April, the VOE students held a breakfast meeting for

the next year's students and gave talks about the various

areas of VOE and OEA. The talks concerned the VOE class itself,

the regional contest, having a part-time job, OEA activities,

and pride in being a VOE student. Of the forty-one students

approved for the 1969-70 school year, forty were girls and

one was a boy.

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[12]Application form devised by Gayle R. Crain, VOE
Teacher-Coordinator, Belton High School, for the 1969-70
school year, Belton, Texas, spring, 1969.

Evaluation

The employers' response for the first year of VOE was enthusiastic. Office jobs were provided for fifteen students, and additional businessmen stated that they would have hired students if they had known about the program in time to include the salaries in their budget. Many businessmen stated that although they did not have the facilities to be able to utilize a VOE student, they thought the program would be an asset to the community. The businessmen's opinion of the program was further indicated by the fact that a number of businessmen began calling the VOE teacher in the spring of 1969 concerning employing the students upon their graduation in May.

Student reaction to the program was also good. Thirty students signed up for the first year, and the number of applicants increased to fifty-one the second year.

The following evaluation questionnaire on office practice was applied by the VOE teacher to the Belton High School VOE program: [13]

> The content of this subject is specifically conceived
> to include an understanding of office procedures,
> indexing and filing techniques, general clerical in-
> formation, and a working knowledge of machines commonly
> found in the business office.

YES   NO

_____ _____ 1. At least one year of typewriting is a prerequisite for office practice.

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[13]William Selden, Robert D. Edwards, and Kenneth A. Swatt, "Evaluating a Business Education Program," The Balance Sheet, L (March, 1969), 298-99.

_____ _____   2. The use of reference books (telephone directory, city directory, zip code directory, secretary's handbook, dictionary, etc.) is part of the instruction.

_____ _____   3. A unit on job information, application forms, letters, interviews, and employment testing is included.

_____ _____   4. Pupils are oriented about business conduct and grooming, and the necessity of cooperation with fellow-workers is emphasized.

_____ _____   5. Pupils are given instruction in the handling of mail, the use of the telephone and telegraph services, and the handling of travel arrangements.

_____ _____   6. Pupils' classwork is evaluated similar to on-the-job work performed by beginning office employees.

_____ _____   7. A short "office staff" meeting (including teacher and all pupils) is held periodically to discuss quality of work, organization of work, room appearance, and other matters that can be discussed in a group meeting.

_____ _____   8. Enough machines are housed in the office practice room so that each pupil has a machine to operate when the class is concerned with this type of work.

_____ _____   9. The transcribing machines are located as far away from the other machines as possible to insure the greatest degree of quietness.

_____ _____ 10. There is a rotation plan of organization whereby each pupil operates a machine for a stated period of time.

For each of the ten questions in the above checklist, the Belton VOE teacher was able to answer yes. In its first year of operation, therefore, the VOE program met the standards set by business educators for a similar course.

A study by Purser in 1966 reported the strengths of VOE programs listed by coordinators in Texas schools. The Belton VOE coordinator felt that the following strengths listed by Purser were among the most important aspects of the new Belton program.[14] From the viewpoint of the student, the VOE program offers on-the-job training and experience, aids the student in seeking and holding a job, gives training in the student's area of interest, aids the student financially, gives the student the opportunity to gain self-confidence in working with the public, provides motivation and student interest, gives the student an overview of a career in office work, provides classroom training with job reinforcement, gives the student an opportunity to mature and learn responsibility, and aids the student in the transition from school to job.

From the viewpoint of the school, VOE promotes good public relations and keeps potential dropouts in school. From the viewpoint of the community, the program provides part-time office help and offers it at a reduced rate since the students in the program may legally be paid three-fourths of the minimum wage requirement for a job. Thus, the VOE program is beneficial to all those involved, including the students, the school, and the community.

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[14]Joyce Purser, "A Study of the Vocational Office Education Programs in Texas Secondary Schools, School Year 1965-1966," unpublished research paper, Department of Business Education, School of Business Administration, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1966, pp. 82-84.

CHAPTER IV

SURVEY RESULTS AND COMPARISONS

To aid in the development of the units to be included
in the new VOE program, the Belton coordinator conducted a
survey at local business firms. In order to determine the
hiring procedures and job requirements for beginning clerical
workers in Belton and Temple, Texas, interviews were held
with employers of twenty-five firms in each of the two cities.
Belton is a small town in Central Texas with a population of
approximately 9,000 people. Most of the business firms are
located in the downtown area, which also includes the city
offices and the offices for Bell County. Temple, which is
located approximately eight miles from Belton, is a city of
approximately 34,000 people. The downtown area covers approxi-
mately four square blocks, and a number of firms are located
in shopping centers throughout the city.

A pilot study, conducted in June of 1968, was based on
a judgment sampling of ten selected business firms in Belton,
Texas. Twenty-five additional Belton firms and a random
sampling of twenty-five Temple firms with more than twenty-five
employees were included in the present study. Data were
collected through personal interviews with the employers of
the fifty firms.

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The survey was conducted during the 1968-69 school term, including the months of September through April. All fifty of the surveyed firms were very cooperative in supplying the requested information. The data received from the interviews were grouped into the following categories: classifications of clerical workers, sources of applicants, general employment requirements, standards of employment and testing, use of part-time employees, and characteristics considered most desirable in clerical workers.

Classifications of Clerical Workers

The business firms interviewed included a wide range in the number of full-time clerical workers employed. As would be expected, the larger firms were found in Temple, the larger of the two cities. The twenty-five Belton firms employed a total of 90 workers, and the twenty-five firms employed a total of 410 workers. In Belton, one firm employed twenty-nine clerical workers, three firms employed six, two employed five, and the rest of the firms employed three or fewer clerical workers. In Temple, one firm employed 148 clerical workers, and the rest of the firms employed 49 or fewer such workers. Five of the twenty-five Temple firms employed more than twenty-five clerical workers. The number of clerical workers employed by the Belton and Temple firms is indicated in Table III, page 47.

TABLE III

NUMBER OF CLERICAL WORKERS EMPLOYED BY SELECTED
BELTON AND TEMPLE FIRMS, 1968-69

Number of Clerical Employees in Firm	Number of Firms		
	Belton	Temple	Total
148		1	1
49		1	1
44		1	1
35		1	1
29	1		1
28		1	1
22		1	1
12		1	1
11		1	1
9		1	1
8		1	1
6	3	1	4
5	2	1	3
4	1	2	3
3	3	6	9
2	5	2	7
1	10	3	13
Total	25	25	50

Job Classifications of Belton Firms

The firms surveyed were asked to list the different classifications of clerical workers employed in their offices. The type of clerical worker employed by the most firms in Belton was the clerk-typist, which was listed by ten of the twenty-five firms surveyed. The bookkeeper was listed by nine firms, and the secretary was listed by six firms. All other classifications were listed by four or fewer firms. Of the

ninety clerical workers employed by the twenty-five firms, thirty-nine were clerk-typists, fourteen were bookkeepers, eleven were cashiers, and seven were secretaries. The other job titles were held by five or fewer employees. Each job title listed, the number of firms using the title, and the total number of employees in the firms who had the title are indicated in Table IV, page 49.

Job Classifications of Temple Firms

The type of clerical worker employed by the most firms in Temple was the bookkeeper, which was listed by sixteen firms. The clerk-typist was employed by twelve firms, the secretary by nine firms, the receptionist by eight firms, and the executive secretary by seven firms. All other classifications were employed by four or fewer firms. Of the 410 clerical workers employed by the twenty-five Temple firms, 218 were clerk-typists, 57 were bookkeepers, 48 were secretaries, 17 were tellers, 16 were cashiers, 14 were executive secretaries, and 12 were general office clerks. The other job titles were held by six or fewer employees. A complete list of job titles is contained in Table IV, and the percentages are indicated in Table V, page 50.

TABLE IV

CLASSIFICATION OF CLERICAL WORKERS OF SELECTED
BELTON AND TEMPLE BUSINESS FIRMS, 1968-69

Job Title*	Number of Firms Using Job Title			Number of Employees with Title		
	Belton	Temple	Total	Belton	Temple	Total
Clerk-Typist	10	12	22	39	218	257
Bookkeeper	9	16	25	14	57	71
Secretary	6	9	15	7	48	55
Cashier	2	3	5	11	16	27
Teller	.	2	2	.	17	17
Executive Secretary	.	7	7	.	14	14
General Office Clerk	.	4	4	.	12	12
Receptionist	1	8	9	1	9	10
Clerk-Stenographer	4	2	6	5	4	9
Receptionist and Clerk-Typist	3	3	6	4	4	8
Machine Operator	1	2	3	1	6	7
Typist	2	.	2	5	.	5
Receptionist and Clerk-Stenographer	1	1	2	2	1	3
Secretary-Bookkeeper	.	2	2	.	2	2
Receptionist-Dispatcher	1	.	1	1	.	1
Receptionist-Stenographer	.	1	1	.	1	1
Receptionist-Secretary	.	1	1	.	1	1
Total	.	.	.	90	410	500

*Job titles are listed in numeric order according to the total number of employees having the title.

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TABLE V

PERCENTAGES OF SELECTED BELTON AND TEMPLE BUSINESS
FIRMS USING LISTED JOB CLASSIFICATIONS, 1968-69

Job Title*	Per Cent of Firms Using Job Title		
	Belton	Temple	Total
Bookkeeper	36	64	50
Clerk-Typist	40	48	44
Secretary	24	36	30
Receptionist	4	32	18
Executive Secretary	. .	28	14
Clerk-Stenographer	16	8	12
Receptionist and Clerk- Typist	12	12	12
Cashier	8	12	10
General Office Clerk	. .	16	8
Machine Operator	4	8	6
Receptionist and Clerk- Stenographer	4	4	4
Secretary-Bookkeeper	. .	8	4
Teller	. .	8	4
Typist	8	. .	4
Receptionist-Secretary	. .	4	2
Receptionist-Stenographer	. .	4	2
Secretary-Dispatcher	4	. .	2

*Items are listed in numeric order according to the total
percentage of business firms using the job title.

Sources of Applicants

The firms surveyed were asked from what source they
obtained most of their applicants for clerical employment.
Most of the firms listed more than one main source of appli-
cants. Of the twenty-five Belton firms, fourteen obtained
most of their clerical workers through a file of previous

applicants. Five firms used newspaper advertising, five
considered recommendations of present employees, three used
a private employment agency, one used a public employment
agency, one contacted business schools, and one asked other
firms whether they knew of any good applicants.

Of the twenty-five Temple firms, fourteen used the
public employment agency in obtaining applicants for clerical
positions, twelve firms had a file of previous applicants,
nine used newspaper advertising, eight contacted a private
employment agency, and three considered recommendations of
present employees.

A total of twenty-six firms kept a file of previous
applicants, fifteen checked with a public employment agency,
and fourteen used newspaper advertising. It would be practical,
therefore, for a high school graduate to leave a data sheet
and application blank with selected firms, to register with
the public employment agency, and to watch the local news-
paper advertisements for job openings.

General Employment Requirements

The general employment requirements included minimum
education and previous experience required.

Minimum Education

Of the twenty-five Belton firms surveyed, two had no
minimum education requirement, and one required either edu-
cation at a business college or two years of college. The

remaining twenty-two firms required a minimum of a high school education. Of these twenty-two firms, however, one firm stated that it preferred persons with one or two years of college education.

Of the twenty-five Temple firms, two had no minimum education requirement, one required business college or two years of college, and one required either business college or a high school education plus experience. The remaining twenty-one firms required a high school education. One of the twenty-one firms requiring a high school education preferred a business college education.

A total of forty-three firms, or 86 per cent of the Belton and Temple firms surveyed, required a high school education for clerical workers. The Ginder study, in comparison, found that over three-fourths of the respondents required a high school diploma.[15]

Previous Experience

When asked whether previous experience was necessary for the beginning office worker, five of the Belton firms surveyed replied that it was required, and one firm replied that the requirement depended upon the amount of education the applicant had. Nineteen Belton firms stated that

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[15]Charles E. Ginder, "Businessmen Questioned on Amount of Training They Expect Beginning Clerical Workers to Have," Office Executive, XXXV (November, 1960), 54-55.

experience was not required, but five of these firms added that they did prefer experienced workers.

Of the twenty-five Temple firms, eleven required previous experience of all their clerical workers, one firm required it of the secretary only, and one required it of the bookkeeper only. Twelve firms stated that experience was not necessary, but six of these firms added that they preferred experienced workers.

Only 20 per cent of Belton firms surveyed required previous experience of all clerical workers hired, but 44 per cent either required or preferred experience. Of the Temple firms, 44 per cent required experience of all workers, and 76 per cent either required experience of some or all of their workers or preferred it. A total of 60 per cent of Belton and Temple firms required or preferred experience. Dodd, in comparison, found that only 25 per cent of Dallas firms surveyed in 1967 required experience of beginning office workers.[16] The difference in requirements is probably due to the law of supply and demand. In smaller cities such as Belton and Temple, clerical job openings are limited, and there are usually a number of applicants for each opening. Business firms, therefore, can be very selective in hiring.

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[16]Diane B. Dodd, "A Comparison of Employment Standards for Beginning Typists, Stenographers, and Secretaries in Selected Manufacturing Firms in the Dallas Area," unpublished research paper, Department of Business Education, School of Business, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1967, p. 39.

The fact that 60 per cent of Belton and Temple firms
surveyed either require or prefer experience is significant
for high school graduates seeking initial clerical positions.
Vocational Office Education students in the cooperative work
program, however, have the advantage of nine months of part-
time office experience when they graduate from high school.
VOE students in the laboratory program have an advantage over
the other high school graduates because they have completed
intensive training on various office machines, in office
procedures, and in business ethics. In addition, the labora-
tory students have completed an hour a day as school office
assistants in order to gain some practical experience.

Standards of Employment and Testing

The participating Belton and Temple firms were asked
to disclose the standards for the different office positions
in their companies and the methods used in determining whether
the job applicants possessed the abilities required to meet
these standards.

Methods of Determining Abilities

Of the twenty-five Belton firms, twenty-two considered
recommendations from previous employers, seven accepted the
word of the applicant, three administered tests, two used a
trial period, and one accepted the grades of the applicant.

Of the two firms using a trial period to determine abilities, one used a one-week period and the other used a six-weeks period.

Of the Temple firms surveyed, twenty-two considered recommendations from previous employers, ten administered tests, five accepted the word of the applicant, and three used test scores obtained by the employment agency.

Typewriting Requirements

The fifty participating firms were asked whether they administered a typing test to applicants for clerical positions and what standards of performance they had for these workers. They were also asked to list the kind of typewriter their employees used.

Typewriting requirements of Belton firms.--Of the twenty-five Belton firms, twenty-two did not administer a typing test, one gave a production test, and two gave a timed writing. All three firms giving typing tests gave a five-minute test to applicants. None of the three firms had a specific maximum number of errors allowed on the test. One firm deducted one word for each error on the tests, and the other two deducted ten words per error. Two firms used a manual typewriter for the test, and one firm used an electric typewriter.

When asked to specify minimum typing speeds required, seventeen Belton firms replied that they had no minimum requirement. Six of these seventeen firms added that they preferred

accuracy to speed. The other eight firms did have specific minimum speeds required for one or more clerical employees. The lowest minimum speeds required were 30 to 40 net words a minute, required of the typists and secretaries by one firm, and 40 net words a minute, required of the clerk-typists by a second firm. The receptionist and clerk-typist in one firm was required to type 50 gross words a minute, and the clerk-typists and clerk-stenographers in another firm were required to type 50 net words a minute. One firm required the typists and clerk-typists to be able to type 60 net words a minute, and a second firm required 60 net words a minute of its clerk-typists and clerk-stenographers. For secretaries, one firm required 50 to 60 net words a minute, and a second firm required 60 net words a minute.

Two Belton firms required a typing speed of 40 words a minute, two required 50 words a minute, and four required 60 net words a minute. Ginder, in comparison, found that a majority of San Francisco firms required a typing speed of 50 net words per minute on a five-minute test when ten words were deducted per error.[17]

Of the Belton firms, thirteen owned only manual type-writers, six owned only electric, and two owned only Selectric

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[17]Ginder, op. cit.

typewriters. One of the six firms with all electric typewriters owned a Selectric. One firm owned all electric typewriters except for one manual, one owned all manual except for one electric, one owned both manual and electric typewriters, and one new firm did not own any typewriters at the time of the interview.

Typewriting requirements of Temple firms.--Of the twenty-five Temple firms surveyed, seventeen did not administer a typing test, seven gave a production test, and one gave a timed writing. Of the eight firms giving typing tests, two gave ten-minute writings and six gave five-minute writings. Three of the firms did not have a maximum number of errors allowed but compared papers of clerical applicants. One firm had no maximum number of errors for general clerical workers but allowed only three errors for secretarial applicants. Of the remaining three firms giving tests, one firm allowed ten errors on a ten-minute test, two allowed five errors on a five-minute test, and one allowed five errors on a ten-minute test. Three firms deducted one word per error, one deducted ten per error, and one did not deduct any words for each error. For the typing test, one firm used a manual typewriter, six used electric typewriters, and one used a Selectric.

When asked to specify minimum speed requirements, seventeen firms replied that they had no required speed for typing. The other eight firms had requirements ranging from 40 to

60 net words a minute. For clerk-typists, two firms required 40 net words a minute, one required 45 gross words a minute, and two required 45 net words a minute. For clerk-stenographers, one firm required 60 gross words a minute, and one required 60 net words a minute. For secretaries, one firm required 40 net words a minute, two required 50 net words a minute, one required 60 gross words a minute, and one required 60 net words a minute. One firm also required 60 net words a minute of its executive secretaries. A total of six firms required typing speeds of 40 to 45 words a minute, two required 50 words a minute, and five required 60 words a minute.

Of the twenty-five Temple firms, eight owned only manual typewriters, eleven owned only electrics, one had only Selectrics, and five owned both manual and electric typewriters. Whereas a majority of Belton firms owned manual typewriters, a majority of Temple firms owned electric typewriters.

Shorthand Requirements

The fifty participating firms were asked whether they required clerical workers to be able to take shorthand. If the firms did require shorthand, they were also asked whether they gave a shorthand test to applicants and whether they had a minimum speed requirement.

Shorthand requirements of Belton firms.--Eighteen of the Belton firms stated that they did not require shorthand, but three of these firms added that they did prefer it. Of the seven firms requiring shorthand, three firms required it of the clerk-stenographers, and four required it of only the secretaries. Three of the seven firms did not administer a shorthand test, and four of them did give a five-minute test to applicants. All four firms gave a test that consisted of the dictation of letters. Two firms did not have a specific number of errors allowed on the test, one firm allowed five errors on the test, and the remaining firm required a mailable copy.

When asked to specify the minimum speed requirement for shorthand, five of the firms stated that they had no minimum but preferred accuracy to speed. One firm specified 65 words a minute as the requirement for secretaries, and the remaining firm specified 90 to 120 words a minute as the requirement for secretaries. In comparison, Dodd found that Dallas shorthand requirements ranged from 60 to 120 words a minute.[18]

Shorthand requirements of Temple firms.--Twelve of the Temple firms did not require shorthand, and thirteen did have the requirement. Clerk-stenographers were expected to be able to take shorthand in two of the firms, secretaries in

[18]Dodd, op. cit.

eight firms, executive secretaries in five firms, and the receptionist-secretary in one firm. Of the thirteen firms requiring shorthand, ten did not administer a shorthand test. Of the three giving tests, one gave a three-minute test, and two gave a five-minute test. All three firms gave a test that consisted of the dictation of letters. Two firms had no maximum number of errors allowed on the test, and one firm allowed three errors per letter. Eleven of the firms did not have a minimum speed requirement for shorthand, and two firms required 60 words a minute of its secretaries. Ginder, in comparison, found that San Francisco shorthand requirements ranged up to 90 or 100 but that the majority of responding firms required 80 words a minute.[19]

Office Machines

The respondents in both cities were asked whether they required beginning clerical workers to be able to operate office machines other than typewriters. They were also asked to list the number of the different kinds of office machines they used in their firms.

Office machines in Belton firms.--Of the twenty-five Belton firms, nineteen did not require beginning office workers to be able to operate office machines other than typewriters. Of the six firms that did have this requirement, five firms

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[19]Ginder, op. cit.

required their clerk-typists to be able to operate other machines, and one firm required its receptionist-dispatcher to be able to operate other machines.

Typewriters were used by twenty-four of the twenty-five respondents at the time of the interview. The office machines other than typewriters used most frequently by Belton firms were the ten-key adding machine, used by fifteen firms, and the copier, used by ten firms. The full-keyboard adding machine was listed by nine firms, the printing calculator by eight firms, the posting machine by seven firms, and the mimeograph by five firms. Transcribing machines were used by two firms, and the rotary calculator was listed by only one firm. No firms reported owning a key-driven calculator or a spirit duplicator.

In the total number of machines owned by the twenty-five Belton firms, the full-keyboard adding machine was reported first with thirty-six machines. The ten-key adding machine was second with eighteen machines, and the printing calculator was third with sixteen machines. The firms owned a total of ten copiers, eight posting machines, five mimeograph machines, and three transcribing machines. Only one of each of the other kinds of machines was listed by the firms. The number of firms using each kind of machine and the total number of machines of each kind in Belton and Temple firms are indicated in Table VI.

Office machines in Temple firms.--Of the participating

Temple firms, sixteen stated that they did not require begin-

ning office workers to be able to operate office machines

other than typewriters, but four of these firms added that

they preferred a worker with such an ability. Of the nine

firms requiring the ability to operate machines, eight firms

required this ability of the bookkeepers, three required it

of the clerk-typists, and one required it of the secretaries.

All twenty-five Temple firms owned typewriters. The

office machines other than typewriters used most frequently

by Temple firms were the printing calculator, used by eighteen

firms; the ten-key adding machine, used by seventeen firms;

and the copier, also used by seventeen firms. The full-

keyboard adding machine and the transcribing machine were each

listed by nine firms, and the rotary calculator and the mimeo-

graph were each listed by six firms. Posting machines were

listed by three firms, and the spirit duplicator and the key-

driven calculator were each listed by two firms. Machines

listed by only one firm included an addressing machine, an

electronic calculator, an offset press, a multilith, and a

multigraph.

The types of machines used most frequently by Belton and

Temple firms were the full-keyboard and ten-key adding machines,

printing calculators, and transcribing machines. Glessner,

in comparison, also found that the office machines used most frequently in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, were the adding machines, transcribing machines, and calculators.[20]

In the total number of machines other than typewriters used by Temple firms, the ten-key adding machine ranked first with eighty-nine machines, while the full-keyboard adding machine was a close second with eighty-five machines. Seventy-four transcribing machines and seventy-three printing calculators were listed. A total of twenty-two copiers was reported, and twelve rotary calculators were listed. The total number of all other kinds of machines owned was six or fewer. A complete list of the office machines owned is indicated in Table VI, page 64.

Bookkeeping

The participating firms were asked whether they required a knowledge of bookkeeping of their beginning clerical workers. Of the Belton firms, fifteen firms stated that they did not require such knowledge, but five of these firms added that they did prefer it. Of the ten firms requiring such a knowledge, three required it of the clerk-typists; three, of the clerk-stenographers; one, of the dispatcher; one, of the bookkeepers;

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[20]Faye Renner Glessner, "A Survey of Selected Cedar Rapids, Iowa, Business Firms to Determine Job Opportunities for High School Graduates," unpublished master's thesis, State College of Iowa, Cedar Falls, Iowa, 1966, p. 90.

TABLE VI

OFFICE MACHINES USED BY BELTON AND TEMPLE FIRMS, 1968-69

Kind of Machines	Firms Using Machines						Total Number of Machines Used		
	Number			Per Cent					
	Belton	Temple	Total	Belton	Temple	Total	Belton	Temple	Total
Full-keyboard Adding Machine	9	9	18	36	36	36	36	85	121
Ten-key Adding Machine	15	17	32	60	68	64	18	89	107
Printing Calculator	8	18	26	32	72	52	16	73	89
Transcribing Machine	2	9	11	8	36	22	3	74	77
Copier	10	17	27	40	68	54	10	22	32
Rotary Calculator	1	6	7	4	24	14	1	12	13
Posting Machine	7	3	10	28	12	20	8	5	13
Mimeograph Machine	5	6	11	20	24	22	5	7	12
Key-driven Calculator	..	2	2	..	8	4	..	6	6
Spirit Duplicator	..	2	2	..	8	4	..	2	2
Addressing Machine	1	1	2	4	4	4	1	1	2
Electronic Calculator	..	1	1	..	4	2	..	1	1
Offset Press	..	1	1	..	4	2	..	1	1
Multilith	..	1	1	..	4	2	..	1	1
Multigraph	..	1	1	..	4	2	..	1	1
Checkwriter	1	..	1	4	..	2	1	..	1

one, of the bookkeepers and tellers; and one, of the bookkeepers and clerk-typists.

Of the Temple firms, thirteen stated that they did not require a knowledge of bookkeeping, but four added that they did prefer such a knowledge. Of the twelve that required a knowledge of bookkeeping, ten required it only of bookkeepers, one required it of clerk-typists, and one required it of general office clerks.

General Tests

The Belton and Temple firms were asked whether they administered tests in the areas of intelligence, aptitude, interest, personality, English, filing, spelling, mathematics, or any other area. If they did give tests, they were asked whether they gave standardized or company-devised tests.

General tests by Belton firms.--Twenty-four of the twenty-five firms stated that they did not give a test in any of the listed areas. One of the twenty-four firms stated that it did give a handwriting test. The remaining firm stated that it administered the Wonderlic Aptitude Test.[21]

General tests by Temple firms.--Fourteen of the twenty-five Temple firms surveyed stated that they did not give any

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[21]E. F. Wonderlic, Personnel Test (Northfield, Illinois, 1959).

general tests. Of the eleven firms that did administer tests,
two gave company-devised intelligence tests, and four gave
company-devised aptitude tests. Of the standardized tests
given, the Occupational Interest Survey,[22] SRA nonverbal[23]
Wonderlic aptitude,[24] Minnesota Clerical Test,[25] Factored
Aptitude Series of perception and dexterity,[26] and The Short
Employment Tests[27] each were given by only one firm. Two
other firms reported using standardized tests, but the em-
ployers did not reveal the names of the tests. One of the
firms used an intelligence test; the other used an aptitude
test. In comparison, the few firms in San Francisco that
reported administering tests used the Wonderlic tests or
the Minnesota Clerical Test.[28]

[22]G. Frederic Kuder, Occupational Interest Survey
(Chicago, 1959).

[23]Robert N. McMurry and Joseph E. King, SRA Nonverbal
Form (Chicago, 1949).

[24]Wonderlic, op. cit.

[25]Dorothy M. Andrew, Donald G. Paterson, and Howard P.
Longstaff, Minnesota Clerical Test (New York, 1959).

[26]Joseph E. King, Factored Aptitude Series (New York,
1956).

[27]George K. Bennett and Marjorie Gelink, The Short
Employment Tests (New York, 1956).

[28]Ginder, op. cit.

Use of Part-time Employees

The participating firms in both cities were asked
whether they employed any part-time clerical workers. If
the firms did have part-time help, they were asked what
positions the part-time workers held and whether they were
students or adults. The firms were also asked whether they
would consider hiring a vocational office education student
if they needed a part-time clerical worker.

Use of Part-time Employees in Belton Firms

At the time of the interviews, nine Belton firms did have
part-time clerical workers. Seven firms employed part-time
clerk-typists, one employed a part-time receptionist-
dispatcher, and one employed a part-time assistant cashier.
Four of the firms utilized adults for part-time help, four
used students, and one firm used both.

When asked whether they would consider hiring a high
school vocational office education student as a part-time
clerical worker, twenty-four of the twenty-five firms answered
that they would. Only one employer stated that he would not
hire a high school student for office work; the reason given
was that a high school student does not stay with a firm long
enough.

Use of Part-time Employees in Temple Firms

At the time of the interviews, nine Temple firms employed part-time clerical workers; three other firms had employed such help in the past. Of the nine firms utilizing part-time help, five employed such help as clerk-typists, three as general office clerks, one as tellers, and one as bookkeepers. Six of the firms used students as part-time office help, one used adults, and two used both students and adults.

When asked whether they would consider hiring a high school vocational office education student as a part-time clerical worker, twenty-two of the twenty-five firms stated that they would. One employer stated that he doubted that he would hire a high school student because he preferred the maturity of a college student. Only two firms stated that they would not hire a high school student for part-time office work. One of the firms stated that high school students are not permanent and frequently move away when they finish school. The other firm stated that it takes too much time to train an employee and that a student is not able to be at work enough time each day.

Characteristics Considered Most Desirable in a Clerical Worker

Each employer interviewed was asked to list five of the characteristics he considered most desirable in a clerical worker. The traits were not ranked since the people who were

interviewed named the traits as they came to mind and did not
list and then rank the traits.

Desirable Traits Listed by Belton Firms

The desirable characteristic listed by the most Belton
firms was a neat appearance, which was named by nineteen firms.
A pleasing personality and the ability to meet the public well
were each listed by ten firms. Ability and honesty were
listed by nine firms; ability to get along with co-workers
was listed by eight; and willingness to work and initiative
were each listed by seven firms. Punctuality and regular
attendance were listed by six firms; and interest in work,
a good telephone voice, and accuracy were each listed by
four firms. The other traits were each listed by three or
fewer firms. The number of firms listing each trait is
indicated in Table VII.

Desirable Traits Listed by Temple Firms

The desirable characteristics listed by the most Temple
firms were a neat appearance, listed by fifteen firms; ability,
listed by thirteen; and a pleasing personality and the ability
to meet the public well, listed by twelve firms each. Depend-
ability and the ability to get along with fellow employees
were each listed by eight firms; honesty and the desire and
ability to learn were listed by seven firms; and willingness
to work was listed by six firms. All other traits were listed
by four or fewer firms. A complete list of the traits named
by Temple firms is included in Table VII.

TABLE VII

CHARACTERISTICS CONSIDERED MOST DESIRABLE IN A CLERICAL
WORKER BY SELECTED BELTON AND TEMPLE FIRMS, 1968-69

Traits Desirable in a Clerical Worker	Belton Firms		Temple Firms		Total Firms	
	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent	No.	Per Cent
Neat Appearance	19	76	15	60	34	68
Pleasing Personality	10	40	12	48	22	44
Ability to Meet Public Well	10	40	12	48	22	44
Ability	9	36	13	52	22	44
Honesty	9	36	7	28	16	32
Ability to Get Along with Co-Workers	8	32	8	32	16	32
Willingness to Work	7	28	6	24	13	26
Initiative	7	28	4	16	11	22
Dependability	2	8	8	32	10	20
Desire and Ability to Learn	3	12	7	28	10	20
Punctuality and Regular Attendance	6	24	2	8	8	16
Accuracy	4	16	2	8	6	12
Loyalty	3	12	2	8	5	10
Efficiency	1	4	4	16	5	10
Interest in Work	4	16	. .	. .	4	8
Good Telephone Voice	4	16	. .	. .	4	8
Ability to Understand and Follow Directions	1	4	3	12	4	8
Perseverance	1	4	2	8	3	6
Neat Work	2	8	. .	. .	2	4
Ability to Communicate with Others	1	4	1	4	2	4
Permanent Resident	2	8	. .	. .	2	4
Good Health	2	8	. .	. .	2	4
Common Sense	2	8	. .	. .	2	4
Maturity	2	8	. .	. .	2	4
Patience	1	4	1	4	2	4
Ambitious	1	4	1	4	2	4
General Intelligence	1	4	1	4	2	4
Ability to Keep Matters Confidential	1	4	1	4	2	4
Legible Handwriting	. .	. .	2	8	2	4
Basic Knowledge	. .	. .	2	8	2	4
Energy	1	4	. .	. .	1	2
Regularity of Church Attendance	1	4	. .	. .	1	2
Background	. .	. .	1	4	1	2
Tact	. .	. .	1	4	1	2
Quiet	. .	. .	1	4	1	2
Cleanliness	. .	. .	1	4	1	2

The ten characteristics listed most frequently by Belton and Temple employers were a neat appearance, a pleasing personality, the ability to meet the public well, ability, honesty, ability to get along with co-workers, willingness to work, initiative, dependability, and the desire and ability to learn. Dodd, in the study of Dallas firms, found that the ten desirable attitude and personality traits listed by the greatest number of firms were grooming, ability to get along with co-workers, accuracy, stability, initiative, responsibility, cooperation, punctuality, adaptability, and willingness to learn.[29]

All twenty-five Belton employers listed five desirable characteristics, making a total of 125. One Temple firm listed only two traits, and one Temple firm listed only three traits, making a total of 120 characteristics.

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[29]Dodd, _op. cit._, p. 41.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As stated in Chapter I, this study was proposed to
determine the hiring procedures and job requirements for
beginning clerical workers in selected firms in Belton and
Temple, Texas, during the school year of 1968-69. The
study specifically attempted to determine the minimum employ-
ment standards for clerical workers and the procedures used
in screening applicants for employment. The purpose of the
material was to compile data to assist in the development of
the units to be included in the curriculum for a vocational
office education program in Belton High School.

A questionnaire was devised and tested for the study.
A pilot study including a judgment sampling of ten Belton
firms had been conducted during the summer of 1968, and the
remaining twenty-five Belton firms were surveyed for the
present study. Since twenty-five Belton firms were included,
a random sampling of a like number of Temple firms were used.
The data were obtained through personal interviews with the
fifty employers of the Belton and Temple firms. These data
were presented in Chapter IV.

Summary of Findings

The summary of the main findings of this study includes the following information:

1. The number of clerical workers in each firm varied from 1 to 148. In Belton firms, the number varied from 1 to 29; and in Temple firms, the number varied from 1 to 148.

2. The types of clerical workers utilized most frequently were the bookkeeper, listed by twenty-five firms; the clerk-typist, listed by twenty-two firms; and the secretary, listed by fifteen firms. Of the twenty-five firms employing book-keepers, nine were in Belton, and sixteen were in Temple. Of the twenty-two firms employing clerk-typists, ten were in Belton and twelve in Temple. Of the fifteen firms listing secretaries, six were in Belton and nine in Temple.

3. Twenty-six firms, including fourteen in Belton and twelve in Temple, secured many of their clerical workers through a file of previous applicants. Fourteen Temple firms used a public employment agency to secure applicants, but no Belton firms listed this source. Fourteen firms, including five in Belton and nine in Temple, used newspaper advertising. Eleven firms, including three in Belton and eight in Temple, contacted a private employment agency. Five Belton firms and three Temple firms considered the recommendations of present employees.

4. Forty-three firms, including twenty-two in Belton and twenty-one in Temple, required a high school education as the general minimum education requirement. Two firms in each city had no minimum education requirement, one firm in each city required either two years of college or a business college education, and one Temple firm required either a business college education or a high school education plus experience.

5. Thirty-one of the fifty firms, including nineteen in Belton and twelve in Temple, did not require previous office experience. Sixteen firms, including five in Belton and eleven in Temple, did require previous office experience. One Belton firm stated that the requirement depended upon the amount of education the applicant had. One Temple firm required experience of the secretary only, and one Temple firm required it of the bookkeeper only.

6. Forty-four firms, twenty-two in each of the two cities, considered recommendations from previous employers in determining abilities of applicants. Three Belton firms and ten Temple firms administered tests. Twelve firms, including seven in Belton and five in Temple, accepted the word of the applicant. One Temple firm used test scores secured by an agency, two Belton firms used trial periods, and one Belton firm checked the applicant's grades in school.

7. Only three Belton firms and eight Temple firms administered a typing test.

8. Only eight Belton firms had minimum typing speed requirements, which varied from 30 to 60 words a minute. Only eight Temple firms had minimum typing speed requirements, which varied from 40 to 60 words a minute. The remaining thirty-four firms stated that they had no minimum speed requirement for typing.

9. Thirteen Belton firms and eight Temple firms owned only manual typewriters; six Belton firms and eleven Temple firms owned only electric typewriters. One Belton firm had five Temple firms owned both manual and electric typewriters, two Belton firms and one Temple firm owned only Selectrics, one new Belton firm did not own a typewriter yet, one Belton firm owned all manuals except for one electric, and one Belton firm owned all electrics except for one manual typewriter.

10. Seven Belton firms and thirteen Temple firms required shorthand of one or more clerical employees.

11. Four Belton firms and three Temple firms administered shorthand test consisting of letter dictation.

12. Of the seven Belton firms requiring shorthand, five had no minimum speed requirements and stated that they preferred accuracy to speed. One firm required 65 words a minute, and the remaining firm required 90 to 120 words a minute.

Of the thirteen Temple firms requiring shorthand, eleven firms had no minimum speed requirements, and two firms required 60 words a minute.

13. Nineteen Belton firms and sixteen Temple firms did not require previous experience in operating office machines other than the typewriter. The remaining firms required previous experience of bookkeepers, clerk-typists, and secretaries.

14. Typewriters were the office machines used most frequently by the fifty Belton and Temple firms; only one Belton firm did not own a typewriter at the time of the survey.

15. Other than the typewriter, the office machine used most frequently was the ten-key adding machine, which was listed by a total of thirty-two firms, including fifteen in Belton and seventeen in Temple. The copier was listed by twenty-seven firms, including ten in Belton and seventeen in Temple; and the printing calculator was listed by twenty-six firms, including eight in Belton and eighteen in Temple. The full-keyboard adding machine was listed by eighteen firms, half of which were in each city.

16. In the number of machines used, the full-keyboard ranked first with 121 machines, 36 in Belton and 85 in Temple. The ten-key adding machine ranked second with 107 machines, 18 in Belton and 89 in Temple. The printing calculator was third with 89 machines, 16 in Belton and 73 in Temple; and the

transcribing machine was fourth with 77 machines, 3 in Belton
and 74 in Temple.

17. Ten Belton firms and twelve Temple firms required a
knowledge of bookkeeping. In addition, five Belton firms
and four Temple firms that did not have the requirement did
prefer that workers have such a knowledge.

18. One Belton firm administered an aptitude test; the
remaining twenty-four firms did not administer any general
tests. Eleven of the twenty-five Temple firms administered
tests. Four firms gave company-devised aptitude tests, and
two gave company-devised intelligence tests. One firm gave
a standardized interest test, one gave a standardized intelli-
gence test, and five gave standardized aptitude tests.

19. Nine Belton firms and nine Temple firms employed
part-time clerical workers at the time of the survey. Three
additional Temple firms had utilized part-time help in the
past.

20. Four Belton firms used adults for part-time clerical
help, four used students, and one firm used both adults and
students. Six Temple firms used students, one used adults,
and two used both students and adults.

21. Twenty-four Belton firms stated that they would con-
sider hiring a VOE student for part-time clerical help. Only
one employer stated that he would not hire a student.

Twenty-two Temple firms stated that they would consider hiring a VOE student. Two firms stated that they would not hire a student, and one employer stated that he probably would not hire a student.

22. The six most desirable traits in a clerical worker according to frequency of listing were a neat appearance, named by a total of thirty-four firms; a pleasing personality, the ability to meet the public well, and general clerical ability, all listed by twenty-two firms; and honesty and the ability to get along with co-workers, each listed by sixteen firms.

Hypotheses

Based on the findings of this study, all of the hypotheses were accepted. It was hypothesized that most firms in Belton and Temple would use methods other than testing in screening applicants for employment. Since only three Belton firms and ten Temple firms administered tests in screening applicants for employment, the first hypothesis was accepted.

It was further hypothesized that

1. Training, rather than experience, would be considered essential for employment. Since only sixteen of the fifty Belton and Temple firms required previous experience of all clerical workers, the hypothesis was accepted.

2. Accuracy, rather than speed, would be considered essential in the skill areas such as typing and shorthand.

Since only sixteen of the fifty firms had minimum typing speed requirements and only four firms had minimum shorthand speed requirements, the hypothesis was accepted.

3. The typewriter would be the machine used most frequently in Belton and Temple firms. Since forty-nine of the fifty firms owned typewriters at the time of the survey, the last hypothesis was also accepted.

Conclusions

The conclusions in this study are limited by the data presented in Chapter IV. Since the conclusions are based on the information obtained from Belton and Temple firms only, they should not be applied to firms in other cities.

1. A person with a high school education can secure a clerical position in Belton and Temple, Texas.

2. The positions most likely to be available include bookkeepers, clerk-typists, and secretaries.

3. A person who files an application blank with companies increases his chances of employment. Registering with public and private agencies and watching newspaper advertisements will also increase an applicant's opportunities for employment.

4. Beginning clerical workers may work in a small firm employing 1 to 12 workers or in a large firm employing 22 to 148 clerical workers.

5. A high school graduate with no previous experience can obtain a clerical position in Belton or Temple, but previous experience or training will increase his chances of securing a job.

6. High school graduates with work experience will be evaluated according to their recommendations from previous employers. Those without experience will usually be considered according to the impression they make upon the interviewer. Only a few applicants will have to take tests to secure employment.

7. The applicant will probably not be required to take a typing test or to meet a specific minimum speed requirement, but he will be expected to maintain a high level of accuracy.

8. In a small town, offices will probably be equipped with manual typewriters. In a larger city, the offices will more likely be equipped with electric typewriters.

9. An applicant does not have to be able to take shorthand, but having the skill will increase chances of securing a position.

10. If an applicant does take shorthand, about one-third of the firms will administer a letter-dictation test. However, the applicant will not likely have to meet a specific minimum speed requirement.

11. An applicant will not have to have previous exper-
ience on office machines other than typewriters, but either
experience or school training will improve chances of employ-
ment.

12. The clerical worker who operates office machines
other than typewriters will most likely operate the ten-key
adding machine, copier, printing calculator, full-keyboard
adding machine, or transcribing machine.

13. An applicant does not have to have a knowledge of
bookkeeping to secure a clerical position, but such a knowl-
edge will greatly increase his chances for obtaining a job.

14. In a small town, very few offices will require an
applicant to take a general test in order to secure a clerical
position. In a large city, however, the firms are more likely
to require applicants to take an aptitude or intelligence
test.

15. There is an opportunity for high school students in
a relatively small quantity to obtain part-time clerical work
and gain experience while they are still in school.

16. In order to secure and hold a position as a clerical
worker, an applicant should have the following qualities: a
neat appearance, a pleasing personality, the ability to meet
the public well, general clerical ability, honesty, and the
ability to get along with co-workers.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were drawn from the findings of this study:

1. Belton High School should provide intensive training in clerical office practice and vocational office education courses to prepare students for clerical employment.

2. Students should receive training on electric typewriters as well as manual typewriters.

3. Training on office machines frequently used in Belton and Temple firms should be offered to business students. The courses should include training on the ten-key adding machine, copier, printing calculator, full-keyboard adding machine, and transcribing machine.

4. The importance of the subjects of bookkeeping and shorthand should be stressed to business students.

5. Units on grooming and business ethics should be included in business courses such as vocational office education and clerical office practice.

6. Further study of Belton and Temple business firms should be done periodically by business teachers to determine current hiring procedures, job requirements, and types of machines used. The school's business curriculum should be revised accordingly to meet current job standards Belton students and graduates will be expected to meet.

APPENDIX

PARTICIPATING FIRMS IN BELTON, TEXAS

Albriton-Boren Ford--Mrs. Frances Campbell, Office Manager

Bell County Abstract Company--William A. Stephens, Owner

Belton Journal--James Russell, Owner

Britt Drug--Kelly M. Britt, Jr., Owner

Chamber of Commerce--Gene Linn, Manager

City of Belton--George Ferrell, City Manager

County Clerk's Office--Mrs. Ruby McKee, County Clerk

County Juvenile Probation Office--Walter Minica, Probation
    Officer

County Tax Office--Leland T. Duke, Tax Assessor-Collector

District Attorney's Office--Dennis Holle, Assistant District
    Attorney

District Clerk's Office--Hugh Taggart, District Clerk

Edwards Clinic--Dr. T. P. Edwards, Doctor

First National Bank--Owen P. Carpenter, President

Fred Bandas & Son--Fred Bandas, Owner

Inman Pharmacy--Richard Inman, Owner

J & W Loan Company--Lane Webb, Manager

Johnson's Insulation--Mrs. John F. Adams, Office Manager

Lone Star Gas Company--Jesse Johnson, Local Manager

Monteith Abstract Company--Frank Turner, Sr., Owner

Potts Brothers Hardware--Arthur N. Potts, Owner

Powell Supply Company--Charlie Powell, Owner

State Farm Insurance Company--Royce Smythe, Agent

Teas Clinic--Dr. Sam Teas, Dentist

Texas Rockwool--Oliver Gould, President

Western Auto--Mrs. Leonard M. Hancock, Owner

PARTICIPATING FIRMS IN TEMPLE, TEXAS

American Desk--James Raymer, Manger of Personnel Administration

Chupik Manufacturing Company--Ira Davis, Office Manager

E. R. Carpenter Company--Joe York, Personnel Director

First National Bank--Bob Nobles, Assistant Cashier

Gresham's--James L. Gray, Office Manager

J. M. Wood Manufacturing Company--Mrs. Dean Brown, Office Manager

Kings Daughters Hospital--R. L. Epperson, Administrator

Kress--Charles Morgan, Assistant Manager

Lum-A-Nation Plastic Sign Company--D. M. Chandler, President

Maxfield's--Lawrence G. Maxfield, Owner

Montgomery Ward--William Roy Lea, Assistant Manager

Oak Farms Dairies--Gerald Ferguson, Manager

Paymaster Oil Mill Company--H. G. Morris, Office Manager

Ralph Wilson Plastics--Frank Williams, Personnel Coordinator

Scott and White Hospital--Richard Vulgamore, Personnel Director

Sears--Bill Devine, Assistant Manager

Southwestern Bell Telephone--E. C. Crittendem, Jr., Manager

Taylor Manufacturing Company--Billy G. Reaves, Office Manager

Temco Feed--Cliff Mars, Controller

Temple Daily Telegram--Afton Schultz, Manager

Temple National Bank--Roman Bierschenk, Vice-President

Temple Products--Johnny Chupik, Assistant General Manager

Wendland Grain--Erroll Wendland, Vice-President

Western Hatcheries--Mrs. Janice Wright, Office Manager

Woolco--Mrs. Mary Owen, Office Manager

QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of the business firm _____

1. What types of clerical workers are employed by your firm?
   _____ receptionist   _____ stenographer
   _____ clerk-typist   _____ secretary
   _____ typist   _____ executive secretary
   _____ clerk-stenographer   _____ other _____

2. What is the minimum education required of your office workers?
   _____ high school   _____ college _____ no. of years
   _____ business college   _____ other _____

3. Is prior office experience necessary for beginning office workers?
   _____ yes   _____ no

4. Through what source do you find most of your clerical workers?
   _____ public employment agency   _____ public schools
   _____ private employment agency   _____ business schools
   _____ newspaper advertising   _____ recommendations of
   _____ file of previous   present employees
           applicants

5. How do you determine the abilities of prospective employees?
   _____ administer tests
   _____ use test scores obtained by the employment agency
   _____ accept the grades of the applicant
   _____ consider recommendations from previous employers
   _____ accept the word of the applicant
   _____ other _____

6. What kind of typing test do you administer?
   _____ speed   _____ production   _____ none

7. If you administer a speed test, what is the length of the test?
   _____ 3 minutes   _____ 5 minutes   _____ 10 minutes

8. What is the maximum number of errors allowed on the typing test?
   _____

9. How many words do you deduct for each error?
   _____ one   _____ ten   _____ none

10. What is the minimum typing rate for the following employees? (Indicate gwam or nwam.)

_____ receptionist   _____ stenographer
_____ clerk-typist   _____ secretary
_____ typist   _____ executive secretary
_____ clerk-stenographer   _____ other _____

11. What kind of typewriter will the applicant use for his test?

_____ manual   _____ electric   _____ Selectric

12. What kind of typewriter will the employee use for his job?

_____ manual   _____ electric   _____ Selectric

13. Do you require employees to be able to take shorthand?

_____ yes   _____ no

If so, which employees have this requirement?

_____

14. Do you administer a shorthand test?

_____ yes   _____ no

If so, what length of test do you give?

_____ 3 minutes   _____ 5 minutes   _____ 10 minutes

15. Is the dictation in manuscript or letter form?

_____

16. How many errors are allowed on the test?

_____

17. What is the minimum speed required for each classification of employee?

_____

18. Do you require beginning office workers to be able to operate office machines?

_____ yes   _____ no

If so, which employees have this requirement?

_____

19. Which machines are used by your employees?

_____ ten-key adding machine
_____ full-keyboard adding machine
_____ printing calculator
_____ rotary calculator
_____ key-driven calculator
_____ transcribing machine
_____ duplicating machine   _____ mimeograph   _____ spirit
_____ copier   duplicator
_____ other _____

20. Do you administer any tests in the following areas?
_____ intelligence _____ English
_____ aptitude _____ filing
_____ interest _____ spelling
_____ personality _____ math
What tests are given in the above areas?

_____

21. Is a knowledge of bookkeeping necessary for a beginning worker?
_____ yes _____ no
If so, which employees have this requirement?

_____

22. Do you employ any part-time employees?
_____ yes _____ no
If so, in what positions are they employed?

_____

Are the part-time employees adults or students?

_____

23. Since September of 1968, Belton High School has operated a vocational office education program. The students involved in the program receive training in all areas of clerical work and are employed on a part-time basis in business firms in the community.

Would you consider hiring a high school vocational office education student as a part-time worker?
_____ yes _____ no

24. List five characteristics you consider most desirable in an office worker.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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