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Influence of Study Habits on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State

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ABSTRACT

The research examined how study habits affect the academic performance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. Using a descriptive survey design, the study drew a sample of 400 students from a population of 4,115, determined with the Taro Yamane formula. Data were collected through a 15-item “Study Habits and Academic Performance Scale” (SHAPS) questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale. The instrument’s internal consistency was confirmed with a Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.82, indicating good reliability. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) addressed the research questions, while Chi-square tests at the 0.05 significance level tested the hypotheses. Results showed that effective study habits significantly influence class attendance, participation, and motivation. The researchers recommended that schools introduce structured study-skills programs, particularly focusing on time management and daily scheduling, to enhance students’ academic planning.

Keywords: Study Habits, Academic Performance, Class Attendance, Class Participation, Motivation.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a critical role in individual and societal development, serving as the foundation for knowledge acquisition, skill development, and economic growth. Across the globe, academic performance is a key determinant of students’ future success, influencing their career prospects and overall contributions to society. Consequently, researchers and educators continue to explore factors that impact students’ academic achievement, with a particular focus on study habits. Study habits refer to the behaviours, strategies, and techniques that students use to learn and retain knowledge effectively. Studies suggest that students with strong study habits tend to excel academically, while those with poor study routines often struggle to meet academic demands (Mega, Ronconi, & De Beni, 2014).

In Nigeria, the persistent decline in academic performance among secondary school students has become a growing concern. Various factors, including poor study habits, have been identified as major contributors to poor learning outcomes. Many students lack effective time management skills, struggle with concentration, and fail to adopt productive study techniques, which ultimately affect their academic progress (Effiong & Igiri, 2015). Understanding the relationship between study habits and academic performance is essential for improving students’ learning experiences.

Study habits encompass a set of structured behaviours and learning strategies that students use to process information, complete assignments, and prepare for examinations. Effective study habits include proper time management, goal setting, note-taking, active reading, and consistent revision. When students

develop disciplined study routines, they are more likely to retain information and perform better in academic tasks (Aremu & Taiwo, 2019). In contrast, students with poor study habits often procrastinate, lack organization, and fail to allocate adequate time for learning, which can negatively impact their academic performance. Recent studies indicate that study habits play a crucial role in shaping students' academic success. According to Yusuf and Al-Banawi (2016), students who establish regular study schedules and utilize effective learning strategies perform better in assessments than those who engage in last-minute cramming. Additionally, effective study habits help students develop self-discipline, enhance concentration, and improve information retention. However, in Nigeria, many secondary school students struggle to cultivate good study habits due to distractions from social media, lack of parental guidance, and an overreliance on rote memorization rather than deep learning techniques. Addressing these challenges requires the collective effort of educators, parents, and policymakers to help students adopt better study practices.

Academic performance refers to the extent to which students achieve learning objectives as measured by grades, test scores, and overall academic standing. It is influenced by a combination of cognitive abilities, motivation, socioeconomic background, school environment, and, most importantly, study habits. Research has shown that students with well-developed study routines tend to score higher in examinations, actively participate in learning activities, and demonstrate better problem-solving skills (Kadir, Ahmad & Rahman, 2021). Recent findings suggest that while intelligence and instructional quality are important, study habits significantly determine students' success in school. For instance, a study by Ayodele and Adebisi (2020) found that students who engage in consistent study sessions, utilize effective note-taking methods, and review class materials regularly achieve better academic outcomes than those with erratic study patterns. In Nigeria, concerns about students' declining academic performance have led educators to emphasize the importance of good study habits. Many students struggle due to ineffective learning strategies, lack of focus, and poor preparation for assessments. By fostering better study habits, students can improve their academic performance and develop lifelong learning skills.

Class attendance is a critical determinant of academic success, as it ensures students receive direct instruction, engage in discussions, and clarify doubts with teachers. Regular attendance is associated with higher academic performance, as students who attend classes consistently are more likely to grasp key concepts and retain information effectively (Davis, 2016). However, students' attendance patterns are often influenced by their study habits. Students with good study habits recognize the importance of attending classes and actively engaging in the learning process. They understand that classroom interactions provide valuable insights that cannot be gained solely through self-study. Such students are more likely to be punctual, take detailed notes, and participate in discussions. Conversely, students with poor study habits often develop a casual attitude toward class attendance, leading to missed lessons, knowledge gaps, and lower academic performance. In Nigeria, absenteeism is a persistent issue among secondary school students, often linked to inadequate study routines, distractions at home, and lack of academic motivation (Adebayo, 2018). Encouraging students to adopt disciplined study habits can help improve class attendance and, subsequently, their academic success leading to a better class participation during lessons.

Class participation involves actively engaging in classroom discussions, asking questions, and contributing ideas during lessons. It is an essential aspect of learning, as it promotes critical thinking, enhances communication skills, and fosters deeper understanding of subject matter. Research indicates that students who develop effective study habits are more likely to participate in class, as they feel confident in their knowledge and comprehension of topics (Ganyaupfu, 2019). When students prepare for lessons in advance, review class materials, and take notes, they become more willing to engage in discussions and answer questions. Such active participation enhances their learning experience and improves their overall academic performance. In contrast, students with weak study habits often find it difficult to keep up with lessons, leading to passivity in class. They may hesitate to ask questions, struggle with comprehension, and avoid discussions altogether. In Nigerian secondary schools, rote learning remains a common practice, discouraging students from developing analytical and interactive learning

skills. By promoting effective study habits, students can become more engaged in classroom activities and improve their academic outcomes generally and specifically in areas like extracurricular activities.

Motivation is a key factor that drives students to pursue academic excellence. Study habits play a crucial role in influencing students' motivation by shaping their attitudes toward learning and academic goals. Research suggests that students who set study goals, follow structured learning plans, and monitor their progress tend to stay more motivated in their studies (Pérez et al., 2019). When students adopt disciplined study habits, they experience a sense of achievement, which reinforces their motivation to continue learning. In contrast, students with poor study habits often experience frustration, procrastination, and low self-confidence, leading to a lack of interest in academic work. In Nigeria, lack of motivation has been identified as a major factor contributing to students' poor academic performance. Many students struggle to remain focused due to ineffective study strategies, distractions, and lack of goal setting. By fostering strong study habits, students can enhance their motivation, develop resilience, and achieve academic success.

Statement of the Problem

Academic performance among secondary school students in Nigeria, including those in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State, has been a subject of concern for educators, parents, and policymakers. Despite efforts to improve the quality of education, reports continue to indicate a decline in students' performance in national and regional examinations. Several factors have been identified as contributors to this issue, including socioeconomic background, teacher effectiveness, school infrastructure, and, more importantly, students' study habits. Effective study habits are widely recognized as essential for academic success, as they influence students' ability to comprehend, retain, and apply knowledge. However, many students in Nigeria exhibit poor study habits, such as irregular study schedules, lack of organization, reliance on last-minute cramming, and inadequate time management. These ineffective learning strategies can often result in poor class attendance, low class participation, and lack of motivation all of which negatively impact academic performance. Despite numerous studies on academic achievement in Nigeria, there is limited research specifically addressing the influence of study habits on key aspects of student engagement, such as class attendance, class participation, extracurricular involvement, and motivation. Understanding this relationship is crucial in developing strategies to improve students' learning experiences and overall academic success. This study, therefore, seeks to examine the extent to which study habits influence these factors among secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to ascertain the influence of study habits on academic performance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the influence of study habits on class attendance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.
2. Assess the influence of study habits on class participation of secondary school students.
3. Examine the influence of study habits on motivation of secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the influence of study habits on class attendance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State?
2. What is the influence of study habits on class participation of secondary school students?
3. What is the influence of study habits on motivation of secondary school students?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Study habits have no significant influence on class attendance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.
2. Study habits have no significant influence on class participation of secondary school students.
3. Study habits have no significant influence on motivation of secondary school students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised of 4,115 public secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 400 students. The sample size was arrived at using the Taro Yamane formula for finding sample size of a population. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Study Habits and Academic Performance Scale (SHAPS).” The questionnaire was made up of 15 items and followed the Likert modified four-point scale in which respondents indicated their levels of agreement with the statements made by ticking any of the four options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The options had numerical values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 points respectively. The instrument’s internal consistency was confirmed with a Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.82, indicating good reliability. The data were analysed based on the research questions using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation and the hypotheses were tested using the Chi-square (X^2) goodness of fit test at .05 level of significance, with 2.50 serving as the criterion mean for decision making on the items to be responded to and below 2.50 was considered negative and disagree.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Research Question 1: *What is the influence of study habits on class attendance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State?*

Table 1: Analysis of Influence of Study Habits on Class Attendance of Secondary School Students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

S/N	Item description	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
1	I attend classes regularly because I have a personal study timetable that I follow.	46	189	76	89	2.48	.96	Disagree
2	I am less likely to skip school when I have reviewed my notes the previous day.	117	194	33	56	2.93	.97	Agree
3	Completing assignments on time motivates me to attend classes regularly.	60	243	62	35	2.82	.79	Agree
4	I prepare for classes in advance, which encourages me to be present in school.	49	222	73	56	2.66	.87	Agree
5	Poor study habits have caused me to miss some of my classes.	51	184	95	70	2.54	.93	Agree
Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation $\bar{X}= 2.68$ SD= .902								Agree

Table 1 indicates that the mean ratings of respondents’ responses for items 1 to 5 are 2.48, 2.93, 2.82, 2.66, and 2.54 with corresponding standard deviations of .96, .97, .79, .87, and .93 respectively. Respondents rated all items above the 2.50 cut-off point. The cluster mean of 2.68 with the cluster standard deviation of .902 is above the cut-off point of 2.50 which indicates that study habits have influence on class attendance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Research Question 2: *What is the influence of study habits on class participation of secondary school students?*

Table 2: Analysis of Influence of Study Habits on Class Participation of Secondary School Students.

S/N	Item description	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
6	I am more confident to participate in class when I have studied the topic before the lesson.	275	90	35	0	3.60	.65	Agree
7	My regular study routines help me contribute meaningfully to class discussions.	62	245	58	35	2.83	.79	Agree
8	I ask questions in class because I usually prepare and read ahead.	53	129	107	111	2.31	1.018	Agree
9	I find it difficult to participate in class when I do not study before coming to school.	51	279	56	14	2.92	.63	Agree
10	My note-taking and regular revision habits make me more active during lessons.	56	203	71	70	2.61	.93	Agree
Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation $\bar{X}= 2.85$ SD= .8038								Agree

Table 2 indicates that the mean ratings of respondents' responses for items 6 to 10 are 3.60, 2.83, 2.31, 2.92, and 2.61 with corresponding standard deviations of .65, .79, 1.018, .63, and .93 respectively. Respondents rated all items above the 2.50 cut-off point. The cluster mean of 2.85 with the cluster standard deviation of .80 is above the cut-off point of 2.50 which indicates that study habits have influence on class participation of secondary school students.

Research Question 3: *What is the influence of study habits on motivation of secondary school students?*

Table 3: Analysis of Influence of Study Habits on Motivation of Secondary School Students.

S/N	Item description	SA	A	D	SD	\bar{X}	SD	Decision
11	I feel more motivated to learn when I stick to my study plan.	120	160	80	40	2.90	.95	Agree
12	Studying regularly gives me the confidence to aim for high academic goals.	320	60	20	0	3.75	.54	Agree
13	When I complete my study tasks as planned, I feel more encouraged to keep learning.	160	180	40	20	3.20	.81	Agree
14	Lack of study discipline sometimes makes me lose interest in schoolwork.	183	139	42	36	3.17	.95	Agree
15	My study habits influence how determined I am to succeed academically.	170	172	1	57	3.14	.99	Agree
Cluster Mean and Standard Deviation $\bar{X}= 3.23$ SD= .85								Agree

Table 3 indicates that the mean ratings of respondents' responses for items 16 to 20 are 2.90, 3.75, 3.20, 3.17, and 3.14 with corresponding standard deviations of .95, .53, .81, .95, and .99 respectively. Respondents rated all items above the 2.50 cut-off point. The cluster mean of 3.23 with the cluster standard deviation of .85 is above the cut-off point of 2.50 which indicates that study habits have influence on motivation of secondary school students.

Hypotheses Testing

In testing the hypotheses of this study, Chi-square (X^2) was used to test the responses of respondents at .05 level of significance.

Hypothesis 1

Study habits have no significant influence on class attendance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Table 4: Chi-square Test of Influence of Study Habits on Class Attendance of Secondary School Students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Response	O	E	df.	Level of sign.	X ² cal	P-value	Decision
			3	.05	115.340	.000	Sig.
SA	46	100.0					
A	189	100.0					
D	76	100.0					
SD	89	100.0					
Total	400						

Table 4 revealed that $\chi^2 = 115.340$, $df = 3$ and $p = 0.00$. Since the p-value of 0.00 is less than the set alpha-value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) at 3 degrees of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that study habits have no significant influence on class attendance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State is therefore, rejected. This implies that study habits have significant influence on class attendance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State.

Hypothesis 2

Study habits have no significant influence on class participation of secondary school students.

Table 5: Chi-square Test of Influence of Study Habits on Class Participation of Secondary School Students.

Response	O	E	df.	Level of sign.	X ² cal	P-value	Decision
			3	.05	32.200	.000	Sig.
SA	53	100.0					
A	129	100.0					A
D	107	100.0					
SD	111	100.0					
Total	400						

Table 5 revealed that $\chi^2 = 32.200$, $df = 3$ and $p = 0.00$. Since the p-value of 0.00 is less than the set alpha-value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) at 3 degrees of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that study habits have no significant influence on class participation of secondary school students is therefore, rejected. This implies that study habits have significant influence on class participation of secondary school students.

Hypothesis 3

Study habits have no significant influence on motivation of secondary school students.

Table 6: Chi-square Test of Influence of Study Habits on Motivation of Secondary School Students.

Response	O	E	df.	Level of sign.	X ² cal	P-value	Decision
			3	.05	80.000	.000	Sig.
SA	120	100.0					
A	160	100.0					
D	80	100.0					
SD	40	100.0					
Total	400						

Table 6 revealed that $\chi^2 = 80.000$, $df = 3$ and $p = 0.00$. Since the p-value of 0.00 is less than the set alpha-value of 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) at 3 degrees of freedom, the null hypothesis which states that study habits have no significant influence on motivation of secondary school students is therefore, rejected. This implies that study habits have significant influence on motivation of secondary school students.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion of the findings of this research was organized around the research questions and hypotheses. The four null hypotheses that were postulated and tested were all rejected.

The first finding of the study revealed that study habits have significant influence on class attendance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. This suggests that students who develop consistent and effective study habits such as good time management, scheduling, and pre-lesson preparation are more likely to attend classes regularly. This aligns with the findings of Alotaibi (2019), who emphasized that time management significantly reduces academic stress and improves attendance, as students are more prepared and feel more confident to engage in school activities. Similarly, Ogunkola and Durowoju (2020) observed a positive relationship between effective study habits and attendance patterns among secondary school students in Nigeria. These findings imply that fostering productive study habits can be a strategic intervention to address the widespread problem of school absenteeism, particularly in contexts where student engagement is low due to external challenges.

The second finding of the study revealed that study habits have significant influence on class participation of secondary school students. This means that students who are academically disciplined are more likely to participate actively in class discussions and activities. When students enter the classroom well-prepared and confident in their understanding, they tend to be more engaged and are more likely to ask questions or contribute to learning activities. Desalegn and Berhan (2022) found that self-regulated learners, those who plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning were more involved in classroom participation. Adeyemi and Ogunyemi (2017) also noted that students with strong academic discipline demonstrated higher levels of interaction during lessons. This finding underscores the importance of cultivating effective study habits as a means to foster interactive and participatory classrooms, which are known to enhance deeper learning outcomes.

The third finding of the study revealed that study habits have significant influence on motivation of secondary school students. This highlights the role of academic routines not just in performance, but also in internal psychological states such as motivation. Students who maintain consistent and organized study schedules tend to feel more autonomous, competent, and purpose-driven in their academic work. Mbatha and Ngidi (2020) found a strong relationship between structured study practices and increased academic motivation, especially among learners in rural contexts where external motivators may be limited. Adeosun and Bello (2018) further noted that metacognitive study strategies like planning and self-monitoring boosted students' confidence and motivation levels. This finding implies that interventions aimed at developing students' study habits may be a key to unlocking intrinsic motivation, which is more sustainable than relying solely on external rewards or penalties.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded study habits have significant influence on class attendance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. The findings of the study clearly demonstrate that study habits play a critical role in shaping various aspects of secondary school students' academic life. From improving class attendance to enhancing participation and boosting motivation, effective study practices serve as foundational tools for academic success and holistic development. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Schools should implement structured study skills programs that emphasize time management and daily scheduling to help students plan their academic routines effectively. Guidance counsellors should work closely with students to create personalized study plans that encourage regular attendance by fostering a sense of responsibility and academic preparedness.

2. Teachers should integrate study habit training into their instructional methods by assigning pre-class preparation tasks and promoting active learning strategies such as group discussions and presentations. This will enable students to come to class better prepared and more confident to participate in lessons.
3. Educators foster intrinsic motivation by encouraging reflective study practices such as self-monitoring, journaling, and progress tracking. Additionally, schools should recognize and reward consistent study efforts to reinforce positive academic behaviours and boost students' confidence and commitment to learning.

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