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Students' Study Habits as Correlates of Academic Achievement in Public Secondary Schools in Anambra State Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: This research investigated the relationship between students' study habits and academic achievement in mathematics among public secondary schools in Anambra State. The study aimed to determine how study habits correlate with academic performance and whether these relationships vary by gender and geographical location.

Methodology: Data collection was carried out using a self-constructed questionnaire, with validation and reliability established by experts in measurement and evaluation and an educational psychologist. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to calculate the questionnaire's reliability index. A sample of 400 Senior Secondary School II (SS II) students, equally divided by gender, was selected from 18 public secondary schools across both urban and rural areas in Anambra State. Data were collected through direct administration of the instruments, and analysis was performed using Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient to address the research questions and test the hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05.

Findings: Results showed a moderate positive correlation (r = .456) between study habits and academic performance overall. For gender differences, study habits had a low positive correlation (r = .398) with academic achievement for males and a moderate positive correlation (r = .495) for females. Urban and rural students both exhibited a moderate positive relationship (r = .455 for urban, r = .453 for rural) between study habits and academic performance. All correlations were statistically significant, indicating that effective study habits are crucial for improving academic achievement regardless of gender or location.

Conclusion: The research suggests targeted interventions to address gender and geographical variations in study habits. It also acknowledges limitations and recommends further investigation into study habits and academic achievement in different educational contexts.

Keywords: Study Habits, Academic Achievement, Secondary Schools, Mathematics Performance, Gender Differences, Urban-rural Disparity.

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Introduction

The relationship between students' study habits and their academic achievement has garnered significant attention in educational research, particularly within the context of public secondary schools in Nigeria. Study habits are the routine behaviors and strategies that individuals use to effectively learn and retain information. These habits include various practices such as setting goals, organizing study materials, creating a conducive study environment, managing time efficiently, and employing active learning techniques like summarization and self-testing (Suarni et al, 2024). Effective study habits are essential for maximizing academic performance and can vary based on personal preferences and learning styles. They help students to maintain focus, enhance comprehension, and achieve better results in their academic pursuits. Developing good study habits is crucial for academic success and lifelong learning (Iqbal et al, 2022).

Research consistently highlights that effective study habits are crucial for academic success. Tagud and Valle (2023) argues that students who engage in systematic study routines, such as regular review sessions and organized note-taking, tend to achieve higher academic outcomes. This assertion is supported by Aljaffer et al, (2024), who found that consistent study schedules and effective time management significantly enhance students' performance in secondary schools. In terms of specific study habits, one important factor is the use of self-regulation strategies. According to MacKewn et al, (2022), students who employ self-regulation techniques, such as goal setting and self-monitoring, often perform better academically. This finding aligns with earlier work by Kasyoka (2023), who emphasized that students who set clear academic goals and regularly assess their progress are more likely to succeed.

The impact of reading habits on academic achievement has also been extensively documented. Brown-Kramer (2021) conducted a study revealing that students who engage in regular reading outside of their prescribed curriculum tend to have better academic performance. This is corroborated by Sunday and Akporehwe (2022), who found that extensive reading, including supplementary materials, positively affects students' comprehension and overall grades. Moreover, the role of peer study groups is another area of interest. Bickerdike et al, (2016) highlights that collaborative learning through peer study groups can enhance understanding and retention of academic material. Students who participate in such groups often benefit from diverse perspectives and collaborative problem-solving, which can lead to improved academic results.

However, not all study habits contribute positively to academic achievement. According to Anggeraini et al, (2024), the presence of maladaptive study habits, such as procrastination and cramming, can negatively impact academic performance. They argue that these habits hinder effective learning and lead to lower grades, which is consistent with findings from earlier studies by Makhdoom et al, (2023), who noted that procrastination was a significant predictor of poor academic performance among Nigerian secondary school students. Poor study habits have a clear correlation with negative effects on exam performance, recollection, reading comprehension, taking notes, self-regulation, and efficiency, according to research. This lack of study skills prevents students from understanding, remembering, and applying their knowledge.

The pressing concern over the faltering academic achievements of secondary school students has become a focal point, urging both practitioners and researchers to pinpoint strategies for bolstering success rates in crucial exams such as the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). The observed lackadaisical attendance, failure to complete homework, and inadequate exam preparation have been linked to the recent distressing plummet in students' performance across internal and external assessments. Studies scrutinizing students' study habits within school contexts have unraveled additional culprits contributing to academic underachievement (Sunday & Akporehwe, 2022). These encompass weak bonds with educational institutions, strained family dynamics, meager parental support for education, and socioeconomic disadvantage, all interwoven with heightened antisocial behavior and diminished academic attainment. Notably, a distinct gap emerges in the absence of comprehensive longitudinal

investigations encompassing these multifaceted determinants of academic achievement within the context of Anambra State's secondary schools (Ajileye, 2021).

Numerous teachers have observed that learning and study habits are crucial components that are dynamic in nature and do not take place in a vacuum. Given that learning is influenced by a variety of circumstances, it is crucial to identify certain key variables and the degree to which they are impacted by students' study habits and vice versa so that efforts may be concentrated on raising students' overall standards (Ewell, Cotner, Drake, Fagbodun, Google, Robinson, Soneral and Ballen, 2022). Effective study techniques can only be used by students who have strong study habits. Due to effective study techniques, one person learns more deeply and rapidly than the others. Nobody can dispute the significance of teaching and learning throughout the educational process. students must have a clear understanding of their talents, solid study habits, and the ability to employ effective study methods for this process to be successful. Teachers must also properly understand their subject matter in order to successfully convey it to students.

Learning how to study entails putting aside the practices and viewpoints that have made studying difficult and tedious and discussing practices and viewpoints that make studying more enjoyable and productive. One's carelessness and inadequate study habits are the major causes of learning inefficiency (Glassman, Matkovic, Sheu, Demers, Glassman, Thompson & Kruse-Diehr, 2022). As stated by Barcenas and Bibon (2022), robust study habits offer significant advantages to students by enabling them to excel in their chosen domains and achieve success, while weak study habits hinder learning and lead to failure. Describing effective foundational study habits, Rabia, Mubarak, Tallat, and Nasir (2017) emphasized the importance of studying with the primary goal of comprehension. Thus, study habits can be described as a person's habitual behaviors and activities aimed at successful studying and learning. These habits play a crucial role in helping students grasp their coursework and in cultivating a comfortable and immersive learning environment. It is essential for students to cultivate strong study habits as they contribute to their advancement of knowledge and skills in the educational setting. Conversely, inadequate study habits can cause frustration and learning challenges for some students.

Having a good study habit in school is a crucial concept that has been linked to students' performance. As a result, the idea of student study habits has grown in importance and relevance to several educational outcomes. The study behavior and habits of students therefore serve as the resources that support their academic achievement. Students' study habits are integrated into a variety of factors that have a significant impact on their achievement and such factors cannot be held in isolation from the family background, school environment, study methods, and community in which students reside. As indicated by Gettinger and Seibert (2012), students with unfavorable study habits are prone to achieving unsatisfactory academic outcomes. Since studying tends to improve a student's academic abilities, having strong study habits may lower the failure rate in educational institutions (Gettinger & Seibert, 2012). Because of this, studying is extremely beneficial for getting good overall marks even if some students may not find it fascinating (Rana & Kausar, 2011). At any educational institution they may be enrolled in, being the best, performing the best, and striving for total excellence is the ultimate objective for many students.

Seeking a tranquil study environment, incorporating breaks, setting objectives, and engaging in practice tests exemplify effective study habits. Study behaviors encompass actions to comprehend academic material and prepare for assessments. Unique to each individual, study habits are pivotal for success. Prior research highlights beneficial study habits, including quiet settings, consistent practice, sidestepping distractions like TV and phones, note-taking, breaks, calming music, tailored learning methods, and tackling challenging content first (Cerna & Pavliushchenko, 2015). Conversely, poor study habits encompass procrastination, evading study sessions, unsuitable environments, and studying with excessive noise from music or television.

Study Objectives

1. Relationship between students' study habit and academic achievement among secondary school students.
2. Relationship between study habit and academic achievement of male and female secondary school students.
3. Relationship between study habits and achievement of urban and rural secondary school students.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between students' study habit and academic achievement in mathematics among public secondary school students?
2. Does students' study habit relate with academic achievement of male and female secondary school students in mathematics?
3. What is the relationship between students' study habit and achievement of urban and rural based secondary school students in mathematics?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated and will be tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H_0 1: There is no significant correlation between students' study habit and academic achievement of secondary school students.

H_0 2: There is no significant correlation between students' study habit and academic achievement of male and female secondary school students in Anambra State.

H_0 3: There is no significant correlation between students' study habit and academic achievement of urban and rural based secondary school students in Anambra State.

Method

This study adopted a correlational research design. This choice was based on the need to examine relationships between ICT usage and various educational outcomes without manipulating variables. Anambra State was selected for its notable academic performance, consistently ranking among the top five states in WAEC standards over the past five years. The state, predominantly Igbo with a small Igala minority, covers an area of 4,416 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 4.1 million according to the 2006 census. Its capital, Awka, is well-known for its craftsmanship industries. Anambra is divided into 21 local government areas and further segmented into three senatorial districts, each encompassing several local government areas. This geographical and administrative setup, combined with its six educational zones, made Anambra an ideal location for the study due to its urbanization and educational infrastructure.

The research focused on a substantial population of 133,592 senior secondary two (SS II) students across public secondary schools in the state. This group was chosen because SS II represents a crucial stage where students prepare for important national examinations such as WAEC, NECO, and JAMB. The choice of SS II students is significant as it captures their readiness and engagement with ICT tools at a pivotal point in their academic careers. To ensure a representative sample, 400 students were selected from 18 public secondary schools in Anambra State. This sample was equally divided between male and female students and chosen using a multi-stage sampling technique. The process began with the random selection of three schools from each of the six educational zones within the state. Subsequently, all SS II students from these schools were included in the sample. This approach was designed to guarantee that

every student had an equal chance of being selected, thus enhancing the study's representativeness and reliability.

The data collection involved a self-constructed questionnaire divided into two sections. The first section collected demographic information, while the second addressed research questions using a 4-point Likert scale. Responses ranged from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree," with mean scores used to categorize the responses into various levels of agreement. This instrument was adapted from established scales, including the Mathematics Achievement Scale (MAS). The MAS assessed students' understanding of geometrical concepts through multiple-choice questions and was meticulously designed to cover cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Validation was conducted by a panel of three experts: an educational psychologist and two educational psychometrists from reputable universities. Their evaluation ensured that the instruments were aligned with the study's objectives and research questions. The experts' feedback led to necessary revisions, such as refining research questions and adjusting the questionnaire's format. Construct validity was confirmed through Principal Component Analysis (PCA), which demonstrated that the sample size was adequate and the factors extracted accounted for a substantial portion of the variance in the data.

To ensure reliability, a trial test was conducted in Enugu State, involving 30 SS II students. This test confirmed the consistency of the instruments, with high reliability coefficients indicating dependable results. The Mathematics Achievement Scale and the overall instrument achieved reliability coefficients of 0.92, reflecting their robustness. Data collection was efficiently managed through direct delivery methods, supported by a team of trained research assistants. The process involved providing clear instructions to the respondents and ensuring the prompt collection of completed questionnaires. This approach aimed to achieve a 100% return rate and minimize missing data. Data analysis was performed using the 2023 edition of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS). The Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was employed to assess the relationships between variables, with statistical significance determined by a p-value threshold of 0.05. The analysis adhered to established guidelines for interpreting correlation values and hypothesis testing, ensuring rigorous evaluation of the research questions and hypotheses.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between students' study habit and academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students?

Table 1: *Pearson Correlation between Students' Study Habits and Academic Achievement in Mathematics*

Variation		Study Habits	Achievement	Remarks
Study Habits	Pearson (r)	1.00	.456[xx]	Moderate
	N	392	392	Positive
Achievement	Pearson (r)	.456[xx]	1.00	relationship
	N	392	392	

[xx] r (.456) = Moderate positive relationship

The Pearson (r) in Table 1 revealed a correlation coefficient of.456 between students' study habits and academic achievement in mathematics across public secondary schools. This indicated a moderately beneficial relationship between a habit of studying and academic achievement in mathematics. This suggests a moderately favorable relationship.

Research Question 2: How does students' study habit relate with academic achievement of male and female secondary public school students in Mathematics?

Table 2*: Pearson (r) between study habit and male and female academic achievement in Mathematics*.

Variation	N	Study habit	Academic Achievement	Remark
Male				
Study habit	160	1.00	.398	Low
Achievement	160	.398	1.00	Positive Relationship
Female				
Study habit	232	1.00	.495	Moderate
Achievement	232	.495	1.00	Positive Relationship

Table 2 shows that for male and female public secondary school students in Mathematics, the Pearson (r) correlation between study behavior and academic achievement was.398 for men and.495 for women. According to these results, there was a low positive correlation between male students' study habits and academic achievement in mathematics, but there was a moderate positive correlation for female students. The results showed that while study habits had a somewhat favorable relationship with female academic achievement in Mathematics, they had a low positive link with male academic achievement.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between students' study habit and achievement of urban and rural based public secondary school students in Mathematics?

Table 3: *Pearson (r) between students' study habit and urban and rural academic achievement in Mathematics*.

Variation	N	Study habit	Academic Achievement	Remark
Urban				
Study habit	239	1.00	.455	Moderate
Achievement	239	.455	1.00	Positive Relationship
Rural				
Study habit	153	1.00	.453	Moderate
Achievement	153	.453	1.00	Positive Relationship

Table 3 showed a correlation of.455 between students' study habits and academic achievement in mathematics between urban and rural students, and.453 between rural and urban students. According to these results, there is a moderately beneficial relationship between the habit of studying and academic achievement in urban and rural areas. This showed that students in public secondary schools in both urban and rural areas had a moderately positive link between study habits and academic achievement in Mathematics.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between students' study habit and academic achievement of secondary school students in Mathematics.

Table 4: *Pearson (r) test of significance of correlation between study habit and academic achievement of public secondary school students in Mathematics*.

Variation		Study habit	Achievement
Study habit	Pearson (r)	1.00	.456 [xx]
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	392	392
Achievement	Pearson (r)	.456 [xx]	1.00
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	392	392

[xx] Correlation is significant at .05 level (2-tailed)

With 390 degrees of freedom and a significance level of.05, Table 4 showed that the computed r was.456 and the p-value was.000, which was less than.05. The null hypothesis was rejected when the p-value (p <.05) was less than.05. This suggested that there is a substantial correlation between public secondary school pupils' academic ability in mathematics and their study habits.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between students' study habit and academic achievement of male and female public secondary school students in Mathematics.

Table 5: *Pearson (r) test of significance of correlation between study habit and academic achievement of male and female secondary school students in Mathematics*.

Variation	N	Study habit	Achievement	p-value	Sig.
Male	160	.398	.398 [xx]	.000	Significant
Female	232	.495	.495 [xx]	.000	Significant

[xx] Correlation is significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

According to Table 5's analysis, the male and female students' study habits and academic accomplishment had a significant association with Pearson (r) values of.398 and.495, respectively, with p-values of.000. Since the p-values are less significant than the.05 level, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a strong correlation between male and female public secondary school students' academic achievement in mathematics and their study habits.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significance relationship between students' study habit and academic achievement of urban and rural based public secondary school students in Mathematics.

Table 6: *Pearson (r) test of significance of correlation between study habit and academic achievement of urban and rural based public secondary school students in Mathematics*.

Variation	N	Study habit	Achievement	p-value	Significance
Urban	239	.455	.455 [xx]	.000	Significant
Rural	153	.453	.453 [xx]	.000	significant

[xx] Correlation is significant at .05 level (2-tailed).

Table 6 demonstrated that, for urban and rural public secondary school students, the Pearson (r) of significance of the association between study habit and academic achievement was.455 for urban students and.453 for rural students, with p-values of.000, respectively. Since the p-values of.000 are less significant than the.05 level, the null hypothesis was rejected. As a result, among public secondary school pupils in Anambra state, both urban and rural, there is a substantial correlation between study habits and academic achievement in mathematics.

Discussion

Relationship between students' study habit and academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students. The findings revealed a moderately beneficial relationship between a habit of studying and academic achievement in mathematics. Jafari, Aghaei, and Khatony (2019) corroborated this observation by identifying a direct and substantial connection between study habits and academic achievement. Various studies have consistently demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between students' study behaviors and their academic success (Kamoru & Ramon, 2017; Rezaie-Looyeh et al., 2017). While Umoh and Edoho (2018) did not observe significant differences in math achievement based on study habits, it's worth noting that students' regular reading practices might exert a considerable influence on their study skills and subsequent academic performance. Therefore, there is a widely

recognized acknowledgment of the connection between robust reading habits and students' overall academic accomplishments.

Relationship between study habit relates and academic achievement of male and female secondary public school students in Mathematics. The results showed that while study habits had a somewhat favorable relationship with female academic achievement in Mathematics, they had a low positive link with male academic achievement. For secondary school students, Gahir, Sahu, and Sahoo (2022) revealed a strong positive link between study habits and academic achievement for male students and a strong positive correlation for female students. This suggests that effective study habits are favorably associated to raising both boys' and girls' academic achievement at the secondary level (Yazdani & Sane-Godbole, 2014). Additionally, Unwalla (2020), who studied and analyzed the study habits of male and female students, discovered a substantial difference between the two genders. She also discovered that females typically had superior study habits than boys.

Relationship between students' study habit and achievement of urban and rural based public secondary school students in Mathematics. The findings indicated a moderate academic performance in Mathematics among students attending public secondary schools in both urban and rural areas. Wani (2015) reported that a higher percentage of rural students (46%) compared to urban students (43%) preferred studying in the morning. Furthermore, according to Wani (2015), urban students showed a greater tendency to read for information (43% vs. 37%) and enjoyment (13% vs. 10%) compared to their rural counterparts who preferred reading for educational purposes (48% vs. 37.5%). Similarly, Pinto and Bajpai (2019) found no significant difference in the academic performance of male secondary-level students between urban and rural areas. However, they observed a significant discrepancy in the academic performance of female secondary-level students from urban and rural backgrounds. Kumari (2020) established a notable correlation between study habits and the urban/rural distinction among students. Kumari (2020) also highlighted substantial variations between rural and urban students in terms of their general study habits. These variations encompassed aspects such as home environment, work planning, reading and note-taking habits, attention span, as well as overall habits and attitudes. Consequently, the study's findings suggest that rural and urban college students significantly differ in various facets of their study habits.

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