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STUDY HABITS AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF INTEGRATED SCIENCE STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Study habits are learning tendencies that influences academic achievement either positively or negatively. The study investigated the habits of secondary school students in relation to their academic achievement in integrated science subject. Two designs, survey and expost-facto were adopted for the study. The population comprised of one hundred and eighty (180) Integrated science students in Junior secondary two (JSS2) schools drawn from six schools in Rivers State, three unity schools and three state owned schools. The population also constituted the sample of two instruments which were used for data collection- a study habit inventory and the second was the test scores of students in integrated science from their second term examination results. Mean and standard deviation were used for analysis. The results revealed that students have good study habits but without a corresponding good academic achievement in integrated science. It was recommended amongst others that teachers should adopt teaching strategies that will promote meaningful learning of integrated science to students.

Keywords: study habits, students, academic, achievements, Integrated Science.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a veritable tool that builds, shapes and develops an individual as well as the larger society. It further influences and enlightens an individual as well as the society in general. Akuezuilo (2006) stressed that the level of educational development of any society or nation determines to a great extent, the quality of life of the members of that society or nation. Furthermore, the scientific development of any nation is largely enhanced by the quality of science education in her school system (Akpan, 2008; Moses 2012). Effective teaching and learning on the part of the teacher and students respectively is a panacea for good performance of the students. Students studying science such as integrated science, agricultural science, Introductory technology and mathematics in the secondary schools must develop effective practice of study habit that will enable them perform higher and be successful in their various fields of study. According to Nuthana and Yenagi (2009) in Mendezebal (2013), students' academic achievement occupy a very important place in education as well as in the learning process. That it is considered as a key criterion to judge one's total potentials and capacities which are frequently measured by examination results.

Jemide (2001) defined study habits as strategies which a learner applies for acquiring knowledge, skills, ideas and competencies. Mendezebal (2013) sees study habit as the pattern of behaviour adopted by students in the pursuit of their studies that serve as the vehicle of learning. It is the degree to which the students engage in regular acts of studying that are characterized by studying routines (e.g. review of material, frequency of studying sessions) occurring in an environment that is conducive to studying. Azikwe (1998) describes study habits as the adopted way and manner students' plans his/her private readings after classroom learning so as to attain mastery of the subjects.

It should be noted that good study habits enhance academic performance while bad study habits could lead to poor performance. Research findings have consistently proved this point, for instance, Menzel cited by Rana and Kausar (2011) observed that many students fail not because they lack ability but because they do not have adequate study skills. Similarly, Fazal in Mendezebal (2013) obtained a significant relationship of time management skills, reading and note taking skills (aspects of study habits) with academic achievements. Mendezebal (2013) in her study found out that the participants do not have favourable study habits and attitudes which invariably led to very low performance. According to her study habits interacts with ability to influence students' performance. An obvious deduction from this is that students with abilities sometimes perform below average. This does not necessarily mean that they are low achievers but could be traced to poor study habits. Success is attained when students exhibit the right kind of attitudes toward study (Azikwe 1998). Study habits of student's span through their time management ability, work methods, attitude to their studies and teachers' and acceptance of education. In Nigeria, several research findings

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revealed profound indications that performance of our country students echo a distant message of lack luster performance in scientific, technological, engineering and mathematical (STEM) disciplines (Obomanu and Akporehwe, (2012), Akpan, (2008); Ifeakor, (2007) and Moses, (2012). A wide range of factors have been identified as contributing to this trend such as teacher factor, attitude of students, lack of conducive learning environment, teaching methods and resources etc. Students' study habits as part of students' factor could as well contribute to the performance of students in the sciences. This is better explained by the motivational system theory of (Pinder 1984) illustrated in Mendezebal (2013) thus performance = ability + motivation indicating that a student with high ability but low motivation is unlikely to perform well.

In this light, Crede and Kuncel (2008) found that non-cognitive factors like study habits, skill and study motivation, among other attitudinal constraints accounted for incremental variance in academic performance beyond standardized test and previous grades. Most students find it difficult to devote sufficient time to study their books as they are easily distracted by less beneficial activities most especially the social media. There should be an intervention strategy aimed at helping students develop effective study habits an aspect well considered is their emotional state. According to Sujit (2001), many factors are responsible for students' study habit and that one of such factors is the emotional state of the student. Ogbodo (2010) had argued that students should be properly counselled to study effectively

and use an appropriate study habit model designed with the aim of showing the students how to study effectively.

Areas to pay attention when addressing students study habits include:

 \Box Homework and assignment;

 \Box Time allocation;

- \Box Study period procedures;
- \Box Concentration;

 \Box Written work;

 \Box Examination;

 \Box Teacher consultation.

Isangedighi (1999) observed that indiscipline, drug addiction, poor socio-economic background of the parents, inadequate motivation on the part of students, lack of information couple with teachers' nonchalant attitude to work and students' negative self-concept have often resulted into students' inconsistent and poor academic performances. Yoloye (1999) submitted that theories of educational disadvantages and social cultural pathology have been most prominent in the explanation of this failure. A growing number of scholars, however, have rejected this latter view and have suggested that many of the problems of learning are the artifacts of dis-continuities which are brought about by the separation of learning from real life functions and situations (Fagbemi, 2001) and by the exclusion of the child's language, values and mode of cognition from the school environment (Ugodulunwa, 2007). It seems that causes of low academic achievement are diverse and cannot be associated with a single major factor alone. For in-stance, proponents of self-concept have found that self-concept and its variables may be a paramount factor in academic failure. Causes of fluctuating performances among students have also been attributed to teacher-student inter-actions, (Adamu, 1998), intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, (Tukur & Musa, 2001) and classroom behaviour1) (Tukur & Musa, 2001) and other extraneous variables. However, it has been observed that studies on the relationship be-tween study habit and students' academic achievement in Nigeria cannot be said to be exhaustive (Ugodulunwa, 2007).

Successful achievement in any form of activity is based upon study, interpretation and application (Yoloye 1999); and that study should have a purpose. It therefore depends on individual to decide why he or she wants to study, either to gain new ideas or to find out relationship between two different things. What one learns as a result of study depends on the degree at which one succeeds in achieving that aim or purpose. As one studies, it is possible, of course to value other than one's primary desire at the moment. Isangedighi (1997) reports strong correlation between study habits and academic achievement of high school students. The importance of study skill training as a component in test-anxiety treatment programme was demonstrated by Abba1) and in another study by Tukur & Musa (2001). These researchers concluded that "a reduction in test-anxiety is no guarantee of subsequent improvement in academic performance when the level of GSJ: Volume 9, Issue 8, August 2021 ISSN 2320-9186

study habit competence is ignored". Some researchers have found note taking activity as study habits variable to be beneficial to students. While Abba1) and Tukur & Musa (2001) found that note taking leads to overall superior performance and retention of new materials. Several investigations have suggested that less skilled reading is characterized by a limitation in short-term memory capacity in addition to inefficient word-identification (Isangedighi, 1997; Yoloye, 1999). But according to (Fagbemi, 2001) the degree of learning depends on the amount of time the child is actively engaged in learning. The time spent on studying helps students to retain the materials learnt, which will eventually boost the students' performance outcome during tests or examinations.

With positive correlation of students' study habits with performance elsewhere in the world, this study seeks to find out the study habits of science students in Bayelsa State in relation to their performance.

Statement of problem

Education is an indispensable instrument for the development of any nation. Teachers are the implementers of the educational programme and they are responsible for the translation of educational theories into practice. For teaching to be effective, it has to be rooted in an understanding of how students learn. Several researchers have conducted research with a view to finding better ways of teaching and learning integrated science. Results indicated that performance in public examination in Integrated science still remain poor. Not much effort seems to have been made towards finding out the difficulties students encounter in learning some of the concepts in Integrated science. Although, many factors may account for students' poor performance in integrated science, it is evident that most students have difficulties in learning some concepts.

Science in the secondary schools is taught through two main categories; as Integrated science at the Basic secondary and the separate science subjects as Agricultural science, Introductory technology and Biology at the Senior Secondary. It is however worrisome to note that research studies and findings had pointed out that there is low achievement in secondary school science (Onwuakpa and Nweke, 2000). Integrated science as the science of life is offered in all Senior Secondary Schools in Nigeria which attracts the greatest patronage of both Science oriented and Arts based students (Nwosu, 2006). Urevbu (1990) pointed out that the teaching of Integrated science is important because it equips the students to comprehend the world around them and equip them with the necessary skills to build a progressive society. Similarly, Nwosu (2005) observed that Integrated science provides a platform for teaching students to develop the ability to apply science concepts and principles in solving everyday life problems. With knowledge explosion all over the world via the Internet, biological knowledge has also expanded. There are advances recorded in fields such as Bio-agricultural science, Physiology, Ecology, Genetics and Molecular integrated science that have made the subject a central focus in most human activities including problems like food

scarcity, pollution, population, radiation, disease, health, hygiene, family life, management and conservation of natural resources as well as Biotechnology and Ethics.

Concept-mapping as a teaching strategy promotes meaningful learning in the teaching-learning situation. For example, studies carried out by Jegede, Alaiyemola and Okebukola (1990) showed that students taught with concept-mapping scored significantly higher than students taught using the Lecture/Regular teaching method. According to them, concept-mapping reduces anxiety, thereby enhancing achievement in integrated science. In the same vein, Peter (1999) investigated the relative effectiveness of concept-mapping and lecture method in Agricultural science. The study revealed that concept-mapping when compared with lecture method produced a significant gain in cognitive achievement than that of the lecture method. Also Asiya (2005) observed that Agricultural science students taught with concept-mapping recalled what was taught and can apply them at any time when compared to those taught with the conventional method.

In another development, Njoku (2006), Ugwu (2007) and Nwagbo and Obiekwe (2010) identified several factors that contributes to the level of difficulty in the teaching and learning of science. These according to them include teaching methodology, lack of qualified teachers, school setting (location), students' ability and teachers' effectiveness. Okebukola (2002) referred to these factors as barriers.

Evidence from research work in Nigeria indicates that very little research efforts had been directed on difficulty of concepts in integrated science.

Study habit, in the view of Adeyemo (2005), is a pattern of activity that goes beyond merely reading for pleasure. According to the author, it is a well-planned and deliberate form of consistency on the part of the student towards the understanding of academic subjects. Crow and Crow (1992), asserted that study habits, include plan/place, a definite time table and taking brief of well-organized notes. In this context, study habit is a well consistent planned strategy or pattern of studying by students towards apprehension of Home Economics in junior secondary schools. In home economics, the study habits of the students play a vital role in reflecting the standard of education and the student's individual achievements. The students may fail to maintain higher level of achievements due to a particular study habit. It is, therefore, desirable that the students should be motivated toward such habits of study by which they may score good grades with better understanding of the subject matter in home economics. Sorenseon (1991) stated that in the good basic study habits, one must study with the primary intention of understanding, which requires one not to hurry in getting through, instead sustained concentration and interest. Shafiq (1978) reported that study habit has positive relationship with the learning, which results in better achievements of students in secondary schools. It was purely in an attempt to bridge the gap that this study was carried out.

Purpose of the Study

- 1. To determine the study habits of Junior Secondary Two JSS2 integrated science students
- 2. To access the extent to which study habits influence students' achievement in basic science.

Research questions

Three research questions were raised for investigation as follows.

- 1. What are the study habits of junior secondary two (Js2 basic science students?
- 2. What are the mean achievements of the students in integrated science,

Agricultural science and Introductory technology?

3. What is the relationship between the study habits of the students and the achievement in integrated science, Agricultural science and Introductory technology

Hypotheses

- 1. There is no significant difference between study habits and students' achievement
- 2. There is no relationship between study habit of students and their achievements in integrated science.

Methodology

Research instruments

Two major research instruments were used for the study. These were: (a) The Study Habits Inventory (SHI) and (b) The Junior Secondary School Performance Test (JSSPT).

(a) The Study Habits Inventory (SHI)

The Study Habits Inventory is a self-reporting inventory which enables the individual student to describe the situations, habits and conditions which affect his use of study time and his subsequent performance on tests and examinations (Bakare, 1977). The inventory which consists of 45 items in form of direct questions to which the students are required to provide answers includes sections on: (i) homework and assignments; (ii) time allocation; (iii) reading and note taking; (iv) study period procedures; (v) concentration; (vi) written work; (vii) examination; (viii) teacher consultation.

According to Bakare (1977), a number of investigations were conducted to investigate validity of the inventory using high performing students and a group of "failing" students.

Test-retest reliability of the SHI was established by administering it twice to a group of students (N = 58; 30 boys 28 girls); mean age = 14.5 years S.D. = 1.73 years with a time interval of 3 weeks. The test-retest reliability was 0.83, P < 05.

(b) The Junior Secondary School Performance Test

The Junior Secondary School Performance Test (JSSPT) was a government organized test. The test has been approved for use as a way of assessing students'

performance at the end of the Junior Secondary School. The JSSPT was trial tested with two administration of two weeks interval using a set of 20 JSS2 students selected from a public secondary school in Port Harcourt Rivers State.

Procedure

The major instrument (SHI) was administered on the subjects by the help of the class teachers. Students were giving a short orientation on how to respond to the items of the instruments. Students were allowed to complete the inventory (SHI) at their own pace. The questionnaire was administered during the students' free periods so as not to disrupt the school time-table. Participants also took the JSSPT the administration of which lasted 1 hour in each school.

Research Design

Two research methodologies were adopted in this study. The first is the survey designed where opinion on the type of study habits adopted was sought from respondents. The second is the expost-facto research design where previous test scores of students in Basic science subject were obtained.

The population comprises one hundred and eighty (180) junior secondary two (JSS2) basic science students drawn from six secondary schools in the state.

s/n	Name of school	No of students
1	Federal Government	30
	Girls College Imiringi	
2	Federal Government	30
	College Odi	
3	Federal Science and	30
	Technical College	

Table 1

	Tungbo	
4	Community Secondary	30
	School Kolo	
5	National Epie High	30
	School Kpansia	
6	Community Secondary	30
	School Biogbolo	

The population also serves as the sample size. Two instruments were employed in this study in order to address the research questions. The first was a study habit inventory. The inventory consisted of (8) sections A-H on different aspects of study habits in form of statements followed by three (3) options which had been selected based on two inventories presented by Bakare in Psycho educational research productions (1998) and Wren (2005). The students were expected to choose the option which best describes their study habit. Test scores in Introductory technology, biology and agricultural science from their second term examination results were obtained from their respective form teachers. The inventory was validated by two experts in Educational Psychology. A reliability index of 0.73 was obtained using PPMC after the inventory was tested on a group comparable to the sample under investigation.

Data collection

The study habit inventory was administered to the students I.e. both the state owned schools and the unity school's sections A-G of the inventory contained 5 items each while section H contained only three items. All the items contained three categories of responses namely: almost never, sometimes and almost always with a weight value of (1) through (3) depending on how the response was favorable or unfavorable statements.

Scoring

For positively structured items, the marks were assigned as follows always never-1, sometimes-2, and almost always-3. For negative structured items the marks were reversed as follows almost never-3, sometimes-2 almost always-1. The maximum score on the 42 items on the inventory was 129 while the minimum was 43. Mean scores of students obtained from both the inventory and test scores were computed to answer the research questions.

Results

The result of the study is presented in accordance with the research questions for the study

Research question 1

What are the mean scores of the study habits of the students?

Table 2 was used to answer this research question

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S/N	Study Habits	X	SD
1	Assignment and homework	79.33	12.69
2	Time Allocation	72.64	14.02
3	Note Taking	63.66	12.41
4	Study periods procedure	73.17	13.45
5	Concentration	68.40	12.92
6	Written work	70.30	12.29
7	Reading speed	66.68	37.84
8	Test examination anxiety		
	Management	72.36	13.57
9	consultations	68.73	16.83
	Mean of means	70.52	

Table 2: Summary of mean scores of the study habits of the students.

Table 3 showed that the students have good study habits as all the study habits examined have means higher than 60. The least mean in the table was 63.66 which are for note taking. The highest mean value was 79.33 which is the mean value for assignment and homework.

Research question 2

What are the mean achievements of students in integrated science, agricultural science and introductory technology?

Table 3 was used to answer this research question.

Table 3: Summary of mean achievements of the students in integrated science, agricultural science and introductory technology.

S.N	Science subject	Mean	SD	

1	Integrated science	53.31	21.05
2	Agricultural science	46.19	15.55
3	Introductory technology	48.21	14.75
	Mean of means	49.21	

Table 3 revealed the achievement levels of the students in the three subjects. Integrated science, agricultural science and introductory technology were generally below the average of 50% as the mean was 49.21. Integrated science was the highest with a mean value of 53.31 which was above 50, while agricultural science was the lowest with a mean value of 46.19.

Research question 3

What is the relationship between the study habits of students and their achievements in integrated science, agricultural science and introductory technology?

Table 4 was used to answer this research question.

Table 4: Summary of the mean of means of the student's study habits and the mean of means of the students' achievements in integrated science, agricultural science and introductory technology.

Table 4

S/N	Variable	Mean of means
1	Study habits	70.52
2	Science subjects	49.21

Table 4 showed that the mean of means of the students' study habits was 70.52 which were above the acceptable value of 60%. This showed good study habit of the students generally while the mean of means of the students' achievements in biology, agricultural science and introductory technology was 49.21 which were slightly below acceptable value of 50%. This summed the achievement of the students to be generally below average.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that the study habits of the students were generally good. This contradicts with Ogodo's (2010) call for counselling of students to develop good study habits. Assignments and homework was assessed to have the highest value. This indicates that the students were not careless with their homework and assignments. The reason could be that, they do not want to fail in their continuous assessment. This must have motivated them to take the homework and assignments serious, closely following assignment and homework in study period procedures which had a mean value of 73.17. Note taking has the lowest mean value, this could be due to slow writing, especially when the note is dictated, having spelling difficulties. This will definitely affect reading speed, as reading speed has the second lowest mean value with 66.68.

Since the study habits of the students were assessed to be generally good, it was expected that the achievement of the students in the science subjects such as integrated science, agricultural science and Introductory technology will be high, but that was not the case, as the students' mean achievements were below the accepted value of 50, as the mean of means was 49.21.

This explained the fact that, it is not just one variable that determines students' achievement. Their low achievements could be as a result of the teachers' factor such as teaching strategy adopted by the teacher availability of qualified and well trained science teachers, teachers' attitude and availability of instructional materials, qualified laboratory staff and well equipped laboratories for integrated science, agricultural science and Introductory technology. This is in line with Sujit's (2001) observation that many factors account for students' academic achievement. This is however at variance with Mendezebal (2013) findings that students with less favourable study habits have low performance and vice versa. The assertions of Obomanu and Akporehwe (2012) corroborates the findings of this study that students' performance in the sciences is low.

This indicates that the teaching and learning of science has a complex relationship of so many variables for the process to be successful. Therefore, all hands must be on deck, from the government to the teachers, students, parents, administrators and all stakeholders, to bring about effective teaching and learning of science.

In the Contemporary Nigerian Secondary Schools, it has been observed that a large number of students find it difficult to devote enough time for their studies. This may go a long way to affect student's performance in a negative way. According to Fagbemi (2001) as reiterated by Ugodulunwa (2007) it was observed that where a child depends solely on other people in most of his activities, the tendency is for such a child to find it difficult to give an accurate evaluation of himself because of the sup-port he usually receives from the parents or the peer group. This attitude often results in non-achieving behaviour. Most of the students in the area of study have been observed to adopt the above pattern of behaviour. This dependent attitude had also been revealed by students' study habits which eventually had a negative effect on their performance outcomes. This study further supports Abba (1997); Tukur and Musa, (2001) who observed that the degree of learning depends on the amount of time the child is actively engaged in learning. Coupled with this is the time spent on learning (reading and learning exercise) which usually helps students to retain the materials learnt which in turn may buttress students' academic performances.

Conclusion

The findings of this study have shown that the students study habits of the sampled schools were generally good. That is they have good study habits ranging from assignment and homework, time allocation for study, note taking, study period's procedure, concentration, written work, reading speed, test/examination, anxiety

management and consultation. But it was found out that the achievements of students in the science subjects of integrated science, Introductory technology and agricultural science were low. This brings to mind that there are so many variables that make science teaching and learning to be successful, that will lead to the students' achieving high in both internal and external examinations. Therefore, such variables like well-equipped separate laboratories for integrated science laboratory personnel, good instructional materials and facilities and well trained qualified Basic science teachers. This should be made possible for an effective teaching and learning for science.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings:

- 1. Parents should encourage their children to study at home;
- 2. For day students, study rooms should be provided for them at home;

3. Teachers should also encourage the students to study in school;

4. Teachers should use appropriate teaching strategy to ensure effective teaching and learning;

5. Instructional materials should be provided in schools;

- 6. Good and well equipped laboratories should be provided for science students.
- 7. Qualified basic science teachers

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