

## STUDY HABITS AS A CORRELATE OF ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE

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### Abstract

*The study investigated study habits as a correlate of academic performance of secondary school students in secondary schools in Anambra state. The aim of the study was to explore the relationship between study habits and academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra state. Two research questions and two null hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 5,110 students respondents. The sample consisted of 511 respondents. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample. Study Habit Inventory by Bakare was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts from Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu university, Igbariam campus. Academic performance was measured using the students' scores in English language and Mathematics. The reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha method. The computation yielded co-efficient value of 0.77. Pearson Moment correlation Co-efficient was used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed a weak positive relationship between study habits and academic performance of students. In addition, the results showed a weak positive relationship between study habits and academic performance of students. In addition, the results showed a weak positive relationship between study habits and academic performance of male and female students in secondary schools in Anambra state. Based on the findings, it was recommended that school administrators should incorporate structured training programme focused on developing subject-specific study strategies particularly for subject like mathematics. These should include time management, note-taking, problem solving and critical thing technique.*

**Keywords: Study Habits, Academic Performance, Students.**

### Introduction

Academic performance refers to the extent to which a student, teacher, or institution has achieved their short or long term educational goals. Academic performance is measured by grades, test scores, examination, assessments and overall achievement in school subjects. It reflects how well a student understands and applied knowledge and skills taught in the classroom.

Alshawabkeh et al (2020) defined academic performance as the degree to which students accomplish learning objectives set out in the curriculum. It is often assessed through formal evaluation, such as examinations and coursework, and is considered a major indicator of educational effectiveness. Similarly, Yadav and Jena (2021) viewed academic performance as the level of attainment of educational goals by a student, typically evaluated through grades, attendance, and participation. This view recognized that academic achievement includes not just performance on tests, but also consistent engagement with learning. The researchers defined academic performance as the student's level of achievement in academic tasks, which is measured through examinations and coursework. It shows how well a student meets predefined educational standards, learns academic content and demonstrate mastery of skills and competencies overtime.

Academic performance remains one of the most significant indicators of educational quality and student success, particularly in the context of secondary education. In Nigerian, the academic performance of secondary school students is under constant scrutiny especially as students are expected to meet high standards in national examinations such as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination

(WASSCE) and the national Examination Council (NECO) examinations. Unfortunately, over the years, reports from the west African Examinations Council (WAEC) have consistently shown that a significant number of students perform below expectations in mathematics. Olusegun (2019) viewed in 2017 that 38.81 percent of the candidates obtained credits in five subjects and above including English language and Mathematics, also that the percentage declined to 36.57 and fell further to 31.28 in the year 2018. The 2019 May/June SSC result released showed that only 529,425 candidates out of 1,692,435, representing 31.28 percent obtained credits in five subjects including English language and Mathematics. In addition, the May/June WAEC results indicated that for Anambra State, although the situation is not as critical as other states, a comparison of 2018 to 2020 West African Examination Council (WAEC) results reveals that there is a decline in performance of students in various subjects, especially English and Mathematics. The persistent underachievement calls for a thorough investigation into individual factor influencing students' academic outcomes. Study habits have been identified as a critical determinant of academic performance.

Study habits refer to the behaviours, attitudes, and strategies that students apply while engaging in learning tasks. These may include planning a study time table, setting academic goals, managing time effectively, preparing for tests, reviewing past materials, minimizing distractions, and using productive study environments. Olatunde and Balogun (2021) defined study habits as the habitual patterns and strategies learners use in organizing and managing their study time, resources, and academic tasks to enhance learning outcomes. Crede and Kuncal (2008) viewed study habits as the behaviours used by students in preparing for tests or learning academic content, such as planning, scheduling, note-taking, and time management. The researchers defined academic performance as habitual practices that directly influence how students learn. They include students' regular practices such as note-taking, time management and goal setting which directly impact academic performance. Students who cultivate good study habits are more likely to understand content deeply, retain information for longer periods, and perform better in assessments (Crede & Kuncal, 2008).

In Anambra state, many secondary school students face challenges that negatively affect the development of sound study habits. These include large class sizes, insufficient teacher supervision, lack of access to learning materials, and competing responsibilities at home especially among students from low income backgrounds. Moreover, guidance and counselling services in many schools are underfunded and poorly utilized, often failing to provide the necessary academic support students need to improve their behaviours (Osa-Edoh & Alutu, 2012). Furthermore, students are rarely taught how to study effectively. In the Nigerian curriculum, there is little emphasis on study skills training, and students are often left to develop their own methods. Some of these methods are ineffective or counter-productive. Many students resort to cramming, late-night reading due to poor preparation and lack of academic confidence. These practices not only limit long-term retention but can also increase anxiety, burnout, and academic failure.

One critical dimension that has attracted attention over the years is the role of gender in influencing academic performance of students. In Nigeria, researchers have consistently examined gender differences in academic performance, leading to varied and sometimes conflicting findings, (Ogunleye & Adeyemo, 2020). While some studies reported that female students have been found to outperform their male counterparts, particularly in language and arts-related subjects, others argued that male students tend to outperform better in mathematics and science-related disciplines (Okoye & Okonkwo 2018, Udezor, 2021). These trends are often attributed to a complex interplay of sociocultural, psychological, and educational factors, including parental expectations, teacher attitudes, peer influence, and gender-role socialization. In Nigeria, particularly in Anambra state, gender-related differences in academic performance have remained a concern, particularly in the face of efforts to promote gender equity in education.

Given the importance of study habits and continued concern over poor academic performance among Nigerian secondary school students particularly those in Anambra state, it becomes necessary to explore how study habits correlate academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra state.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Mathematics remains a core subject in the Nigerian secondary school curriculum and a prerequisite of many science, technology, and professional career paths. Despite its importance, the academic performance of secondary school students in mathematics especially in Anambra state, a region known for educational excellence has continued to be below expectation in both internal and external examinations such as the West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (WASSCE). Recent results from WAEC (2021-2024) shows persistent failure rates in mathematics among secondary school students in the state. This paradox highlights a possible disconnect between students' study habits and their performance outcomes. It raises a question of whether and how students' study habits significantly correlate with their

performance in mathematics within the Anambra educational context. Consequently, there was a need to systematically investigate the relationship between study habits and academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra state.

Specially the study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between study habits and academic performance of SS 2 students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone.
2. Ascertain relationship between study habits and academic performance of male and female SS 2 students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone.

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between study habits and academic performance of SS 2 students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?
2. What is the relationship between study habits and academic performance of male and female SS 2 students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of SS 2 students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone in Anambra State.
2. There is no significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of male and female SS 2 students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone in Anambra state.

### Method

The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study consisted of 5,110 (2110 males and 3000 females) senior secondary school (SS 2) students in public secondary schools in Awka Education zone. The sample comprised 511 (201 males and 310 females) SS 2 students drawn from the population of the study. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The instrument used for data collection was Study Habit Inventory developed by Bakare (1977). Academic performance was measured using students' scores in mathematics. The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling. The reliability was established using Cronbach Alpha. The computation yielded co-efficient value of 0.77. Copies of the questionnaire were administered to the respondents with the help of three research assistants who were briefed on how to administer and retrieve the instrument. Direct delivery method was adopted to ensure high return rate. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for data analysis. The statistical Package for social Science (SPSS) version 26 was used for data analysis.

### Results:

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between study habits and academic performance of SS 2 students in Mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State?

**Table 1: Pearson (r) of the Relationship Between Study Habits and Academic Performance of SS 2 Students in Mathematics**

Variables	N	Study Habits	Mathematics	Remark
Study habits	511	1.00	0.249	Weak positive relationship
Academic performance in mathematics	511	0.249*	1.00	

The results in Table 1 showed the relationship between study habits and academic performance of students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone. The computed Pearson (r) value was 0.249 indicating weak positive relationship between study habits and academic performance of students in mathematics in public secondary school in Awka Education Zone.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between study habits and academic performance of male and female SS 2 students in mathematics?

**Table 2: Pearson (r) of the Relationship Between Study Habits and Academic Performance of Male and Female SS 2 Students in Mathematics.**

Variables	N	Study Habit	Mathematics	Remark
Male Study Habits	201	1.00	0.325*	Weak positive relationship
Female Study Habits	310	1.00	0.304**	Weak positive relationship
Academic performance in mathematics	310	0.304	1.00	

Table 2 revealed the Pearson (r) between study habits and male and female students in Awka Education zone was 0.325 for male and 0.304 for female students. The values implied that the relationship between study habits and academic performance of both male and female (0.325 and 0.304) was weak positive relationship. The result deduced that study habits had a weak positive relationship for both male and female students in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra state.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of SS 2 students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra state.

**Table 3: Test of Significance of Correlation Between Study Habits and Academic Performance of Students in Mathematics.**

Variables		Study Habit	Academic performance in mathematics	Remark
Study habits	Pearson (r)	1.00	0.249**	Significant
	Sig (2-tailed)	1.00	0.004	
	N	511	511	
Academic performance in mathematics	Pearson (r)	0.249**	1.00	
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.004		
	N	511	511	

The results in Table 3 showed that the correlation between study habits and academic performance of students was 0.249 with associated probability value of .004 which was less than 0.05 level of significance. Nevertheless the p-value of 0.004 was less than 0.05 level of significance; hence the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, this displayed that the relationship between study habits and academic performance of public secondary school students in Awka Education Zone in Mathematics was significant.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of male and female SS 2 students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra state.

**Table 4: Test of Significance of Correlation Between Study Habits and Academic Performance of Male and Female Students in Mathematics**

Variables		Study Habits	Academic Performance in mathematics	Remark
Male Study habits	Pearson (r)	1.00	0.325**	Significant
	Sig (2-tailed)		0.004	
	N	201	201	
Academic performance in mathematics	Pearson (r)	.325**	1.00	
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.004		
	N	201	201	
Female Study habits	Pearson (r)	1.00	0.304**	Significant
	Sig (2-tailed)		0.002	
	N	310	310	
Academic performance in mathematics	Pearson (r)	304**	1.00	
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.002		
	N	310	310	

\*\* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4 revealed p-values of study habits and academic performance of male and female students in mathematics as 0.004 for male and 0.002 for female students. The values revealed that the p-value (0.004 and 0.002) were less than 0.05 level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied

that there was a significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of male and female students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Awka Education Zone of Anambra State.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings of the study revealed a weak positive relationship between study habits and academic performance of students in mathematics in public secondary schools in Anambra state. The results of the corresponding null hypothesis showed a significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of students in secondary schools in Anambra state. This is in line with the findings of Ajao (2020) and Obi (2018) who found a significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of students in mathematics. The findings also agree with that of Deir (2020) who revealed a positive relationship between study habits and academic performance of secondary school students in mathematics. The possible reasons for this result could be that many students are not taught how to study mathematics effectively. They may focus on reading notes rather than actively solving problems, which is not an affective way to learn mathematics. If students' study habit do not include solving varied and complex problems, reviewing worked examples, or engaging in peer discussions, their academic performance in mathematics may not significantly improve, hence the weak relationships. In addition, the effectiveness of mathematics instruction plays a critical role in shaping students' performance. In some schools, mathematics teachers may use abstract, teacher-centered methods without providing concrete examples or connecting concepts to real-life situations. In such cases, even students with strong study habits may find it difficult to understand or apply mathematical concepts effectively.

The findings of the study showed a weak positive relationship between study habits and academic performance of male and female students in mathematic in secondary school in Anambra state. The results of the corresponding null hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of male and female students in mathematics in secondary schools in Anambra state. This is in conformity with the findings Obi (2018) and Fiore (2020) who reported a positive relationship between study habits and academic performance of male and female students in mathematics in secondary schools in Anambra state. The possible reasons for the weak relationship is that mathematics is fundamentally skill-based and concept-driven. It requires frequent problem-solving, logical reasoning, and analytical thinking. Study habits such as memorizing formulas, which is common among male and female students are not always effective for mastering mathematical concepts. If the students' study habits lack deep engagement with problem sets or application tasks, their influence on mathematics performance will naturally be weak, regardless of gender.

### **Conclusion**

The study investigated study habits as a correlate of academic performance of secondary school students in Anambra state. Based on the findings, the study concluded that study habits positively correlate with academic performance of students.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. School administrators should incorporate structured training programmes focused on developing subject-specific study strategies, particularly for subject like mathematics. These should include time management, note-taking, self-testing, problem-solving and critical thinking technique. Guidance counsellors and teachers can organize regular workshops to teach students how to study more effectively.
2. Curriculum planners should integrate study habits education into the school curriculum; particularly in guidance and counselling classes. Teachers should educate students on the importance of active learning, goal-setting, and reflective practices that enhance comprehension and long-term academic success.
3. Guidance counsellors should provide individual and group counselling to help students evaluate their current study habits, set academic goals, and monitor their progress. These sessions can include the use of academic self-assessment tools to help students identify their strengths and areas for improvement in study practices.
4. Teachers should organize gender-mixed and gender-specific study circles where students collaboratively tackle mathematics problems. The teacher should train group leaders to facilitate effective discussion, and mutual accountability for regular practice.

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