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Study Habits and Academic Performance of Science Education Undergraduates in Rivers State University, Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aims: This study investigated the study habits and academic performance of science education undergraduates in Rivers State University.
Survey Design: Descriptive survey design was adopted.
Place of Study: Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education Rivers State University, Port Harcourt, Nigeria between May and November, 2021
Methodology: The sample comprised 182 science education undergraduates form first year to final year. The instruments were Science Undergraduates Study Habits Inventory and Cumulative Grade Point Average. The study habits inventory was subjected to face and content validation by two lecturers in Department of Science Education and one lecturer in Measurement and Evaluation and reliability coefficient established by Alpha Cronbach method to be 0.76. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions while hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using independent t-test and Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient.
Results: Results of this study showed that science education undergraduate exhibit bad study habits. Also, there was no significant difference between male and female undergraduates' study habits while a significant difference between first and final year undergraduate study habits was found. Further evidence revealed a significant relationship between study habits and academic

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performance of science education undergraduates.
Conclusion: Bad study habits of science education undergraduates contributes to their poor performance in examinations. There exist a significant difference in study habits with regards to gender (male and female) and class level (first and final year) while there was significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of science education undergraduate.

Keywords: Study habits; science education; undergraduates; academic performance.

1. INTRODUCTION

The ultimate aim of teaching and learning is to achieve optimum understanding of concepts by students and improved academic performance in examinations. In this process, the teacher most often utilize available resources at his disposal and blend them with appropriate teaching methods to ensure comprehension of relevant facts in the topic presented. Students on their own part have a greater role to play by taking time to study lessons taught in the class room and source for additional relevant information from other academic materials and also ensure proper storage and retention of information such that it can be easily retrieved from the memory when necessary. The practices adopted by students during studying when repeated over a period of time constitute the study habits is very essential and cannot be undermined in this regards. Several definitions have been offered to the term "study habit". For instance, [1] define study habits as regular tendencies and practices that one depicts during the process of gaining information through learning while [2] consider study habits as approaches a learner employs during his personal study time in order to achieve mastery of the subject. From the above, study habits habit is consistent in nature and portrays habitual practices for studying which can good or bad and effective or ineffective [3].

Good or effective study habits facilitate retention of concept and enable students to spend their time more productively and efficiently while bad or ineffective study habits inhibit understanding of concepts. Accordingly, good study habits complement the effort of a good teacher and assist students to learn more, gain mastery of topics and ensure good performance in examinations. Without good study habits, effective study cannot be achieved and the effort of qualified teachers and available learning materials will be rendered futile. In support of this assertion, [4] maintained that students who fail to develop good habits are bound to face various problems and possibly develop negative attitude to study which may lead to poor performance. However, [5] outlined the following bad study habits such as inadequate time allocation for studies, delay or non-completion of homework and assignments, defective examination strategies, defective note-taking and lack of teacher consultation.

Based on the relevance of Students' study habit in teaching learning, several studies have been carried out at all levels of education. For instance, [2] assessed study habits of students from 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year in Rajdhani college, Delhi University to determine how study patterns differs with percentage marks scored by students, where they live, and effect of change of environment. Results of the study showed that most of the students do not ideally follow effective study habits. Further evidence from the findings revealed that the average time spent by majority of the students in self-study per week is less, majority of students do not revise their lecture same, students sometimes collaborate in the assignments even if they are marked as individuals, and change of environment affects the grades of the students. These factors accounts for the reason why majority of the first-year students have their first semester percentage is low. [3] investigated the effect of study habits on test anxiety and academic achievement of undergraduate students in university of Lahore using 198 undergraduates as sample. Findings of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between study habits and academic achievement. Test anxiety was negatively correlated with academic achievement and study habits. Further evidence showed that students having effective study habits experienced low level of test anxiety and performed better academically than the students having ineffective study habits. Also, male undergraduate possessed better study habits and excel more academically than their male counterparts.

According to [6] investigated study habits skills components as predictors of academic performance among teacher's trainee in Nigeria. Findings revealed a positive correlation between

study habit skills and academic performance. Further evidence, indicated that homework and assignment were potent predictors of the academic performance of the students. The study also revealed that the best predictor variable of the academic performance of the second-year students was study period procedures while that of third year students was homework and assignment. Significant sex differences in five, out of the eight study habit components skills, all in favour of females was also found. [7] carried out a study to determine the effect of undergraduates' study skills on academic achievement and significances in terms of gender and Department of undergraduates studying in three different departments of school of education Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey. Results of the study revealed a positive correlation between study skills and academic achievement. Significant differences in terms of gender and departments were established. [8] examined study habits and academic performance among the late adolescents' college students of home science in Plampur, Himachal Pradesh. The results suggested significant relationship between academic achievement and study habits. High achieving adolescents were found to perform better in comprehension, task orientation and recording than the low achieving adolescents. The factors affecting the study habits were age, family, income and education which were significantly related. [9] examined relationship between study habits and academic performance of students in a case study carried out at Spice higher secondary school in India. The results of the study revealed a positive relationship between study habits and academic achievement.

According to [10] explored study habits of secondary school students in relation to type of school and type of family in India and discovered that there was no significant difference between the different study habit components of secondary school students from nuclear and joint family. Government secondary school students were significantly better in-home environment and planning of subjects then their counterparts in private schools while private secondary school students were significantly better than their counterpart in government school on preparation for examination. There was no significant difference between government and private secondary school students on reading and note taking, concentration, and school environment components of study habit. Aryal, Shrestha, [4] in their study on developing study habits inventory for secondary level students in Nepal found noticeable similarities and differences in various issues related to study habits among Nepalese government and private schools such as studying in silent and interruption free room while most of the Nepalese students spend two to three hours daily for house related works.

According to [11] investigated the relationship between study habits and academic performance of secondary school students in mathematics in Uyo Local Education Council of AkwaIbom State, Nigeria and found a significant relationship between note taking, students' use of library, time allocation for study and students' academic performance in mathematics. [12] investigated achievement, motivation, study habits and academic achievement of students at secondary school level. Results of the study showed a significant correlation between achievement, motivation, study habits and performance of students. Central and matriculation board school students were found to be significantly better in achievement motivation and study habits compared state board schools to students. Significant difference was found between students in different categories of schools and gender pertaining to achievement motivation, study habits and academic achievement. Girls in all three system of education were found to be significantly better in achievement motivation and study habits compared to boys in the same school.

The study of [13] on gender influence on study habits of mathematics students' achievement in senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Local Government Area of Rivers State revealed a significant positive relationship between students' study habits and their performance in mathematics. Further findings showed that female students tend to have better study habits than their male counterparts. [14] investigated students' variables as predictor of secondary school Students' academic achievement in science subjects in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Ekiti State and found that students' variables which include study habits, attitude and interest of students in science subjects are better predictors of students' performance in science subjects while gender had no influence on students' performance.

1.1 Significance of the Study

The results of this study will assist lecturers in science education to have better understanding

of the study habits of science education undergraduates. The knowledge of these habits and their effects on performance will further provide basis for lectures to fashion out appropriate academic support and guidance to improve their habits and enhance understanding of concepts. Science undergraduate stands the chance of benefiting from this support and guidance to improve their performance in examination to meet the demands of their parents and the society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Every teaching and learning process is aimed at realizing the cardinal objective of ensuring students' understanding of facts and concepts which is usually reflected in examination scores as a measure of learning outcome and performance. Ideally, students' performance in examinations is determined to a large extent by the effort of both teachers and students. The application of suitable teaching methods and utilization of available teaching resources only, without the students fulfilling their own part by performing their responsibilities may not necessarily foster students' understanding of concepts and guarantee good performance. Students on their own part must engage in diligent study of concepts learnt in the classroom after lessons to ensure proper storage of information in the long term memory for easy recall. This will then compliment the effort of a good teacher and bring about the anticipated good performance.

However, the emerging trends in performance of science education undergraduates who are prospective secondary school science teachers in Nigeria shows examination results with cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) scores below the average grade level which is not encouraging. Similar trend is obtained in secondary schools where a recurrent poor performance of students in science subject in certificate and qualifying examinations has been recorded over the years. This has been a major source of concern to stakeholders in education sector, since the problem seems to have a recurrent trend in both secondary and tertiary institutions. Moreover, it is counterproductive to realization of the aims and objectives of science teacher education in Nigeria (National Policy on Education, 2013) where science education is regarded as the pivot of scientific and technological development of Nigeria which is a developing nation of the world. Therefore, as a means of proffering solution to the problem, it becomes imperative to explore possible causes of poor performance of prospective science teachers who are trained to teach at the secondary school level.

Most ongoing Researches in this regards seems to lay so much emphasis on studies related to teachers while student-related studies are left unexplored on the grounds that students' performance mostly in science subjects is greatly determined by the quality of science teaching. Moreover, science education as a distinct discipline has not been explored in any of the available studies. Consequently, this study examines specifically, the study habits of science education undergraduates and their academic performance in an attempt to create a balance in the researches.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study was carried out to investigate study habit and academic performance of science education undergraduates in Rivers State University. Specifically, the study tends to provide answers to the following questions:

1.4 Research Questions

- What are the study habits of science education undergraduates in Rivers State University?
- What are the study habits of male and female science education undergraduates in Rivers State University?
- what are the study habits first and final year science education undergraduates in Rivers State University?
- What is the relationship between study habits and academic performance of science education undergraduates in Rivers State University?

1.5 Hypotheses

$H0_1$. There is no significant difference in the study habits of male and female science education undergraduates in Rivers State University.

$H0_2$. There is no significant difference in the study habits of first and final year science

education undergraduates in Rivers State University.

$H0_3$. There is no significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of science education undergraduates in Rivers State University.

2. MATERIALS

The study adopted descriptive survey design which went further to correlate study habits and academic performance of science education undergraduates in Rivers State University. The sample comprised 148 science education undergraduates representing 58 male and 90 female undergraduates in the Department of Science Education. The instruments were "Science Undergraduates Study Habit Inventory" (SUSHI) adapted from [15,16] and modified by the researchers and Undergraduates Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) The inventory considered frequency of the use of study habits on a four-point scale - Always(A), Frequently(F), Sometimes(S), and Rarely(R).The instrument was validated by two Science Education lecturers and one Measurement and Evaluation Lecturer while the reliability coefficient was determined by Alpha Cronbach method to be 0.83. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer research question. Items with mean response of 2.5 and above in the questionnaire were accepted and considered as study habit while those below were rejected. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested at 0.05 level of significance using z-test while hypothesis 3 was tested with Spearman Rank Order Coefficient (tho) at the same level of significance.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Research Question 1

What are the study habits of science education undergraduates in Rivers State University?

From Table 1, science education undergraduates have the following bad habits with mean response of 2.5 and above: study without following plan of activities 3.21, have no time allocation to studies 2.93, review lecture notes during test and examinations only 3.10 , observe no breaks at intervals to recall what has been studied 3.40, rarely underline main points in textbook 2.74 and never set questions and answer them while studying 2.92, lack concentration while studying 2.56, easily distracted during studies 2.83. Furthermore, the good study habits were: take notes in class and during studies at home 2.64, and study in quiet and conducive place 2.59.

3.2 Research Question 2

What are the study habits male and female science education undergraduates in Rivers State University?

From Table 2 both male and female science undergraduates take notes in class and during studies at home 2.75 and 2.56, study in a quiet and conducive environment 2.69. Only male science undergraduates' study without following plan of activities 3.56, have no time allocation to studies 3.40, review lecture notes during test and exams only 3.48, have no goal what should be covered in a study session 2.57, rarely underline main points in textbook and while studying 2.93, never set questions and answer them while studying 3.21, lack concentration while studying 2.62, easily distracted during studies 2.95. However, only female science education undergraduates' study both difficult and simple topics 2.54, observe no breaks at intervals to recall what has been studied 3.78, study without checking can be remembered 2.74.

3.3 Research Question 3

What are the study habits first and final year science education undergraduates in Rivers State University?

From Table 3, both first and final year science education undergraduates had the mean responses of less than 2.5 and were rejected. the study habits and their mean responses were: study both difficult and simple topics 2.05 and 1.93, review chemistry notes after school every day, 1.99 and 2.45, have study break to recall what has been studied 2.13and2.84, underline main points while studying 2.37 and 2.89. only final year science education undergraduates study according to plan, 2.73, set goal for each study session 2.78, stop to check what can be remembered when studying, 3.30, summarize the note when reading at home 3.01, set questions and answer them while studying 2.64, take note in the class and at home while reading 3.15.

Table 1. Mean response and standard deviations of science education Undergraduates on study habits in Rivers State University

S/N	Study habits	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Study without following plan of activities	3.21	0.30	Accepted
2	Have no time allocation to studies	2.93	0.56	Accepted
3	study both difficult and simple topics	2.00	1.34	Rejected
4	Review lecture notes during test and examinations only	3.10	0.33	Accepted
5	Have no goal what should be covered in a study session	2.23	1.2	Rejected
6	Observe no breaks at intervals to recall what has been studied	3.40	0.45	Accepted
7	Rarely underline main points in textbook and while studying.	2.74	0.34	Accepted
8	Study without checking can be remembered.	2.30	0.41	Rejected
9	take notes in class and during studies at home	2.64	0.65	Accepted
10	Never set questions and answer them while studying.	2.92	0.61	Accepted
11	Lack concentration while studying	2.56	0.57	Accepted
12	Easily distracted during studies	2.83	0.32	Accepted
13	Be serious with Studies only during examinations	2.31	0.33	Rejected
14	study in the library always	2.18	0.42	Rejected
15	study in a quiet and conducive environment	2.59	0.56	Accepted

Table 2. Mean response and standard deviations of male and female science education undergraduates on study habits in Rivers State University

		Male			Female		
S/n	Study habits	Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Study without following plan of activities	3.56	0.65	Accepted	2.40	0.64	Rejected
2	Have no time allocation to studies	3.40	0.34	Accepted	1.89	0.54	Rejected
3	study both difficult and simple topics.	1.66	0.56	Rejected	2.54	0.66	Accepted
4	Review lecture notes during test and exams only	3.48	0.87	Accepted	2.39	0.56	Rejected
5	Have no goal what should be covered in a study session	2.57	0.52	Accepted	2.22	0.39	Rejected
6	Observe no breaks at intervals to recall what has been studied	2.48	0.72	Rejected	3.78	0.98	Accepted
7	Rarely underline main points in textbook and while studying	2.93	0.43	Accepted	2.34	0.78	Rejected
8	Study without checking can be remembered.	2.01	0.63	Rejected	2.74	0.54	Accepted
9	Take notes in class and during studies at home	2.75	0.26	Accepted	2.56	0.61	Accepted
10	Never set questions and answer them while studying.	3.21	0.43	Accepted	2.34	0.34	Rejected
11	Lack concentration while studying	2.62	0.52	Accepted	2.37	0.28	Rejected
12	Easily distracted during studies	2.95	0.41	Accepted	2.47	0,63	Rejected
13	Be serious with Studies only during examinations	2.33	0.96	Rejected	2.93	0.45	Rejected
14	study in the library always	1.65	0.32	Rejected	2.54	0.27	Accepted
15	study in a quiet and conducive environment	2.69	0.63	Accepted	2.48	0.43	Accepted

3.4 Research Question 4

What is the relationship between undergraduate study habits and academic performance?

From Table 4, the mean CGPA and study habits of science undergraduates in Rivers State University are: 0.82 and 2.32, 1.64 and 2.61, 2.53 and 2.82, 3.49 and 2.53 respectively.

3.5 Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the study habits of male and female science education undergraduates in Rivers State University.

From Table 5 below, the calculated value of z = 6.514 is greater than the table value. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the study habits of male and female science education undergraduate in Rivers State University is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in study habits of male and female science education undergraduate in Rivers State.

3.6 Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the study habits of first and final year science education undergraduates in Rivers State University.

From Table 6 above, the calculated value of z = 10.71 is greater than the table value. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference in the study habits of first and final year science education undergraduate in Rivers State University is rejected. This implies that there is a significant difference in study habits of first and final science education undergraduate in Rivers State University.

Table 3. Mean response and standard deviations of study habits of 1st and final year science education undergraduates

	Study habits	First year			Final year		
		Mean	SD	Decision	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Study according to plan and personal schedule of topics in timetable.	2.16	1.01	Rejected	2.73	1.11	Accepted
2	Read both difficult and simple topics	2.05	0.94	Rejected	1.93	0.79	Rejected
3	Review notes after school every day.	1.99	1.22	Rejected	2.45	1.02	Rejected
4	Set goals for each study session to determine what should be covered.	2.32	0.87	Rejected	2.78	1.11	Accepted
5	Have study break to recall what has been studied	2.13	1.10	Rejected	2.84	0.68	Rejected
6	Underline main points while studying.	2.37	0.95	Rejected	2.89	0.99	Rejected
7	Stop to check what I can remember when studying.	2.26	0.88	Rejected	3.30	0.93	Accepted
8	Summarize the note when reading at home.	2.45	1.12	Rejecter	3.01	0.97	Accepted
9	Set questions and answer them while studying.	2.18	0.79	Rejected	2.64	0.87	Accepted
10	Take note in the class and at home while reading.	2.27	0.56	Rejected	3.15	0.89	Accepted

Table 4. Science education undergraduate' study habits and academic performance

S/N	CGPA	No. of undergraduates	% of undergraduates	Mean CGPA	Mean Study Habits
1	0 .0 - 1.00	30	16.48	0.82	2.32
2	1.10 - 2.00	40	57.14	1.64	2.61
3	2.10 - 3.00	110	2.98	2. 45	2.82
4	3.1 - 4.0	5	2.75	3.49	2.53

Table 5. z-test analysis of study habits of male and female science education undergraduates in Rivers State University

Level	N	$\overline{X}$	Sd	Df	St.error	t-cal.	t-crit	Sig.level	decision
Male	72	2.72	0.3842	180	0.0672	6.514	1.960	0.05	Rejected
Female	110	2.13	0.3200						

3.7 Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between study habits and academic and academic performance of science education undergraduates in Rivers State University.

From Table 7 the calculated value of rho = 0.8364 is greater than the table or critical value. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of science education undergraduates in Rivers State University is rejected. This infers that there is a significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of science education undergraduates in Rivers State University.

Table 6. Z-test analysis of study habits of first and final year science education undergraduates in Rivers State University

Resp.	N	$\overline{X}$	Sd	df	St. error	t - cal.	t - crit.	Sig. level	Decision
Boys	330	2.466	0.35412	458	0.00485	10.71	1.960	0.05	rejected
Girls	130	2.518	0.35445						

Table 7. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) analysis of study habits and academic performance of science undergraduates

Variable	Scores					Df	$\sum d^2$	rho cal.	rho crit.	Decision
Performance	2.32	2.61	2.82	2.53	3.27	180	6	0.8364	0.1946	Rejected
Study habit	0.82	1.64	2.53	3.49	4.23					

4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Evidence from the results of this study revealed that science education undergraduates' study without having plan of activities, have no time allocation to studies, review lecture notes during test and examinations only, observe no breaks to recall what has been studied, rarely underline main points in textbook and while studying, never set questions and answer them while studying, lack concentration while studying and are easily distracted during studies(Table 1). These habits possessed by science education undergraduates is a negative indicator of the quality of our prospective secondary school Science teachers. This is predicted on the fact that, in an Ideal situation, a teacher trainee with bad study habits Will graduate with the same bad habits, as such cannot properly guide students to develop good study habits when employed. This findings corroborate the results of [2] where similar bad study habits were discovered among undergraduates of Rajdhani college, Delhi University. Gender consideration in this study revealed a significant difference in the study habits of male and female science education undergraduates (Table 4). Male science education undergraduates exhibit better study habit than their female counter parts. This finding agrees with the results of [6] where sex differences in five, out of the eight study habit components skills, all in favour of females was found, but disagree with that of [13] who found that female students tend to have better study habits than their male counterparts as well as the report of [3,17] that females exhibit better study habits and excel more academically than their male counter parts. Findings on level of study

revealed a significant difference in the study habits of first and final year science education undergraduates in Rivers State University. Final year Undergraduates possess better study habits than first year counterparts which implies progression of good study habits with level of study level possibly as a result of diverse experiences in the colleges or universities.

There was a significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of science education undergraduate (Table 5). The results of this study corroborate the results of other studies on the effect of study habits on academic performance of undergraduates by [6,3,7] where positive correlation between study habit skills and academic performance were found in their separate and independent investigations into study habits and academic performance of graduate teacher's trainee. The agreement of the results of this study with other studies infers that study habit is a potential predictor of academic performance of science education undergraduates.

5. CONCLUSION

Evidence from the results of the study revealed that science education undergraduates exhibit bad study habits. Significant difference in study habits were found in relation to gender (male and female) and level of study (first and final year) while there was significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of science education undergraduate.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.

- Provision should be made for inclusion of study habits as a topic in the general studies course for first year students.
- Undergraduate should be motivated to develop good study habits by lecturers.
- Regular counseling should be offered to undergraduate on study skills strategies in order to boost their study habits and enhance their academic achievement.

CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard, respondents' written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

ETHICAL APPROVAL

As per international standard or university standard written ethical approval has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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