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STUDY HABITS AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ANAMBRA STATE

Chidebelu, Tochukwu Henry
Department of Educational Foundations
Faculty of Education
E-mail: tochukwuhnr@gmail.com
Phone: 08064242041
&
Prof. Uju.P. Egenti
Department of Educational Foundations,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Anambra State.
email :up.egenti@coou.edu.ng
Phone number:08037860587

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to investigate study habits as predictors of academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students in Anambra State. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The correlational survey research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 21,272 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The sample of the study comprised 638 SS2 students, while 503 properly completed copies of the instrument were returned and used for analysis. The Study Habits Scale (SHS) developed by Bakare (1977) and the SS2 academic achievement scores in Mathematics for the 2024/2025 academic session were used to collect data for the study. The reliability of the Study Habits Scale was established using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.86. Simple regression was used to analyse data for the study. Findings of the study revealed that study habits had a low positive prediction of academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students in Anambra State. The result further showed that study habits explained 1.4% of the variance in students' academic achievement in Mathematics and significantly predicted academic achievement. In terms of gender, the findings revealed that male students' study habits accounted for 9.9% of the variance in their academic achievement in Mathematics, while female students' study habits accounted for 1.0% of the variance. The regression results further revealed that male students' study habits significantly predicted their academic achievement in Mathematics, whereas female students' study habits did not significantly predict their academic achievement. It was therefore concluded that study habits are significant predictors of students' academic achievement in Mathematics, although the level of prediction differs by gender. Based on the findings, it was recommended that school administrators and counsellors should organise structured study-skills orientation programmes for students, while the Ministry of Education should integrate practical study-habit training into the secondary school curriculum.

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Keywords: Academic Achievement, Gender, Mathematics, Public Secondary Schools, Study Habits

Introduction

Academic achievement is a central concern in every educational system because it reflects the extent to which learners have attained the expected objectives of schooling. It is a broad concept that covers the knowledge, skills, competencies, attitudes and intellectual abilities acquired through formal instruction and learning experiences. In school settings, academic achievement is commonly expressed through scores obtained in tests, assignments, continuous assessment and examinations. Bossaert and Doumen, as cited in Akinnola and Oredein (2021), described academic achievement as the degree to which a learner, teacher, school or institution has achieved short-term or long-term educational objectives. In the same vein, Nwizuzu (2024) explained that academic achievement at the secondary school level is not only an indicator of school effectiveness but also a major determinant of the future wellbeing of youths and the larger society.

Academic achievement is usually represented by marks awarded by teachers or scores obtained in standardized assessments. It is therefore a measurable expression of students' scholastic standing. Egbo and Okoli (2024) stated that academic achievement refers to students' learning outcomes and the extent to which education and practice have produced measurable competence. In the context of this study, academic achievement refers to the Mathematics scores of SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State. Mathematics was considered appropriate because it is a compulsory subject and a major determinant of students' progression within the secondary education system.

Students in Anambra State appear to face persistent academic challenges, particularly in core subjects such as Mathematics, English Language and Science. Poor academic achievement remains a concern to parents, teachers, students, school counsellors, administrators and policymakers. When students perform poorly, the outcome may extend beyond the classroom to include low self-esteem, frustration, truancy, school dropout, weak career prospects and other social difficulties. Nwanze, Konyefa and Ezeanya (2021) observed that poor academic achievement may contribute to undesirable behaviours such as alcoholism, drug abuse and school dropout. Although various reforms and interventions have been introduced to improve students' academic achievement, many students still perform below expectation. This situation suggests that factors beyond school facilities, curriculum content and teacher effort may be influencing students' academic outcomes.

One factor that has received considerable attention in educational research is study habits. Study habits refer to the regular practices, routines and learning strategies adopted by students in order to acquire, organise, retain and recall information. Nwizuzu (2024) defined study habits as well-planned and purposeful routines of study that promote students' consistency in learning academic subjects and passing examinations. Study habits

therefore include the way students manage their time, prepare for tests, take notes, revise lessons, concentrate while studying, organise their learning materials and memorise important ideas. These habits can either support or hinder academic success depending on how effectively they are practised.

Study habits are important because learning does not occur only when a teacher presents a lesson in the classroom. The learner must also develop personal routines that make it possible to revise, understand and retain what has been taught. Okesina (2019) noted that study habits involve consistent and purposeful approaches to learning. Students who study regularly, avoid procrastination, revise their notes and prepare early for examinations are more likely to retain learning materials than students who study only when examinations are approaching. Sunday and Akporehwe (2022) also emphasized that study habit is a necessary part of building a literate society because it moulds personality, encourages right thinking and supports the generation of new ideas.

In this study, study habits are treated as students' consistent learning behaviours and routines that facilitate effective learning and academic performance. These behaviours include proper time management, note-taking techniques, memorisation techniques, concentration, revision, regularity of study and organisation of study sessions. Time management is particularly important because students who fail to plan their time often postpone assignments, study under pressure and perform below their ability. Saleh (2019) explained that effective time management promotes productivity and goal achievement. In the school context, it enables students to allocate adequate time to class work, homework, revision and rest.

Note-taking is another essential study habit. It encourages active listening and helps students identify important points during lessons. Salame and Thompson (2020) found that strategic note-taking improves students' engagement, performance and learning. Students who take clear notes and review them regularly are more likely to remember concepts, solve problems and prepare effectively for examinations. Similarly, memorisation techniques such as mnemonics, acronyms, repetition and self-instructional strategies assist students in recalling information. Ikebuaso and Obumneke-Okeke (2020) reported that memorisation and self-instructional learning strategies influence pupils' academic performance by strengthening recall and reinforcing learning.

The importance of study habits becomes more evident in Mathematics because Mathematics requires regular practice, logical reasoning, revision of procedures and mastery of concepts. A student may understand a mathematical concept during class but fail to perform well if the student does not practise regularly or revise the steps needed to solve problems. Effective study habits help students to build confidence, reduce examination anxiety and improve the accuracy of problem solving. On the other hand, poor study habits such as irregular reading, lack of concentration, poor note organisation and last-minute preparation may weaken students' academic achievement even when they have capable teachers and adequate learning materials.

Gender is also considered in this study because male and female students may differ in the way they organise study time, concentrate, revise, seek assistance and respond to academic pressure. Shabayang, Bahago and Gotip (2025) posited that gender is a sociological construct influenced by biological and cultural determinants. In educational contexts, gender may shape students' opportunities, expectations, learning behaviours and approaches to academic tasks. Although gender alone may not determine academic achievement, it can interact with learning habits in ways that influence performance. This makes it necessary to examine whether study habits predict academic achievement differently among male and female students.

Previous studies have reported relationships between study habits and academic achievement. Mgbike and Anyamene (2024) investigated study habits as predictors of academic achievement among secondary school students in English Language in Anambra State and found that study habits contributed to academic achievement. Okoli and Anyamene (2024) examined study habits as predictors of upper basic education students' academic achievement in Business Studies in Anambra State and reported that study habits had predictive value. Nwizuzu (2024) also investigated students' study habits as correlates of academic achievement in public secondary schools in Anambra State and found a positive relationship between study habits and academic performance. However, the need remains to extract and present clearly the predictive value of study habits on Mathematics achievement among SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State, including the predictive value among male and female students.

It is against this background that the present paper investigated study habits as predictors of academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students in Anambra State. The paper focuses on study habits as the independent variable, students' academic achievement in Mathematics as the dependent variable and gender as a moderating variable.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate study habits as predictors of academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. examine the predictive value of study habits on academic achievement in Mathematics among SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. determine the predictive value of study habits on academic achievement in Mathematics among male and female SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of study habits on academic achievement in Mathematics among SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State?
2. What is the predictive value of study habits on academic achievement in

Mathematics among male and female SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Hypotheses

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

1. Study habits do not significantly predict academic achievement in Mathematics among SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.
2. Study habits do not significantly predict academic achievement in Mathematics among male and female SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Research Method

The study adopted the correlational survey research design. This design was considered appropriate because the study sought to determine the predictive value of study habits on students' academic achievement without manipulating the study variables. The area of the study was Anambra State, which is located in South-Eastern Nigeria. The choice of Anambra State was informed by growing concern over the academic achievement of students in public secondary schools and the need to identify learner-related variables that may predict students' achievement.

The population of the study comprised 21,272 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in 267 public secondary schools in Anambra State. The population consisted of 9,550 male students and 11,722 female students. SS2 students were considered appropriate for the study because SS2 is a preparatory level for entry into SS3 and external examinations. At this level, students are expected to develop regular study habits that will help them cope with academic demands and improve their achievement.

The sample of the study comprised 638 SS2 students, representing approximately three percent of the total population. The sample was made up of 287 males and 351 females selected from the public secondary schools in Anambra State. Simple random sampling was employed to select the participants so that every student in the population would have an equal and independent chance of being selected. This helped to reduce selection bias and increase the representativeness of the sample.

The instrument used for data collection was the Study Habits Scale (SHS) developed by Bakare (1977). The instrument has two sections. Section A contains personal data of the respondents, while Section B contains 20 items on students' study habits. The instrument is structured on a four-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). Students' Academic Achievement Scores (SAAS), which comprised SS2 students' cumulative results in Mathematics for the 2024/2025 academic session, were collected from the Records Department of the Post Primary School Service Commission (PPSSC), Awka, Anambra State. Mathematics scores were used because Mathematics is a compulsory subject and an important indicator of students' academic achievement.

The reliability of the Study Habits Scale was established through a trial test conducted on 20 SS2 students in Enugu State

who were not part of the population of the study. The data obtained from the trial testing were analysed using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.86 for the Study Habits Scale. This coefficient indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study.

The researcher administered copies of the instrument personally to the respondents with the assistance of five research assistants. The research assistants were briefed on the mode of instrument administration, appropriate conduct, time management and retrieval. The instrument was administered using the on-the-spot approach in the students' respective classrooms. Where immediate retrieval was not possible, a revisit appointment was arranged. The exercise lasted for two weeks. Out of 638 copies of the instrument administered, 503 copies were returned in good condition and used for analysis.

Simple regression was used to answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses. The correlation coefficient (R) was used to determine the predictive value of study habits on academic achievement. For hypothesis testing, the null hypothesis was rejected when the p-value was less than or equal to 0.05 and was not rejected when the p-value was greater than 0.05. All computations were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the predictive value of study habits on academic achievement in Mathematics among SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 1: Simple Regression of Study Habits Predicting Academic Achievement in Mathematics among Secondary School Students

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	SE of Estimate	R^2 Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.118	.014	.012	18.100	.014	7.061	1	502	.008

Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement in Mathematics
Predictor: (Constant), Study Habits

As displayed in Table 1, the correlation coefficient (R) was .118, indicating a low positive predictive value of study habits on academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students in Anambra State. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was .014, which means that study habits explained 1.4% of the variance in academic achievement in Mathematics among the students. This also showed that 98.6% of the variance in academic achievement in Mathematics was explained by other factors not included in the model. The small difference between R^2 (.014) and Adjusted R^2 (.012) suggested that the model's estimate was stable. The standard error of the estimate was 18.100, meaning that the predicted scores for academic achievement in Mathematics differed from the actual scores by about 18.100 units on average. This indicated that although study habits predicted academic achievement, most of the variation in students' achievement was attributable to other variables not considered in the model.

Research Question 2: What is the predictive value of study habits on academic achievement in Mathematics among male and female SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State?

Table 2: Simple Regression of Study Habits Predicting Academic Achievement in Mathematics among Male and Female Students

Model	Group	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	SE of Estimate	R^2 Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	Male	.315	.099	.098	5.13582	.099	.143	1	207	.000
1	Female	.101	.010	.007	5.49152	.010	3.558	1	293	.063

Predictor: (Constant), Study Habits of Male Students
Predictor: (Constant), Study Habits of Female Students

Table 2 showed the predictive value of study habits on academic achievement in Mathematics among male and female students. For male students, the model produced a correlation coefficient (R) of .315. This indicated a low positive prediction of study habits on male students' academic achievement in Mathematics. The associated R^2 value was .099, meaning that study habits accounted for 9.9% of the variance in male students' academic achievement in Mathematics. This implied that 90.1% of the variance in male students' achievement was explained by other factors not included in the model. The Adjusted R^2 was .098, while the standard error of the estimate was 5.13582. This meant that the predicted Mathematics achievement scores of male students deviated from the actual scores by about 5.13582 units on average.

For female students, the model produced a correlation coefficient (R) of .101. This indicated a low positive prediction of study habits on female students' academic achievement in Mathematics. The associated R^2 value was .010, meaning that study habits accounted for 1.0% of the variance in female students' academic achievement in Mathematics. This further implied that 99.0% of the variance in female students' achievement was explained by other factors not included in the model. The Adjusted R^2 was .007, while the standard error of the estimate was 5.49152. This showed that study habits made a small prediction to female students' academic achievement in Mathematics.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Study habits do not significantly predict academic achievement in Mathematics among SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 3: Regression ANOVA Test of Significance for the Variation in Academic Achievement in Mathematics among Students that Can Be Predicted by Study Habits

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1	Regression	2313.322	1	2313.322	7.061	.008	Significant
	Residual	164465.888	502	327.621			
	Total	166779.209	503				

Dependent Variable: Academic Achievement in Mathematics

Predictor: (Constant), Study Habits

Result in Table 3 showed that the variation in academic achievement in Mathematics among students that was predicted by study habits was significant, $F(1, 502) = 7.061$, $p = .008$. The associated probability value of .008 was less than the 0.05 level of significance at which the hypothesis was tested. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This meant that study habits significantly predicted academic achievement in Mathematics among SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Hypothesis 2: Study habits do not significantly predict academic achievement in Mathematics among male and female SS2 students in public secondary schools in Anambra State.

Table 4: Regression ANOVA Test of Significance for the Variation in Academic Achievement in Mathematics among Male and Female Students that Can Be Predicted by Study Habits of Male and Female Students

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1 Male	Regression	.562	1	.562	57.518	.000	Significant
	Residual	81404.991	207	393.261			
	Total	81405.553	208				
Female							
	Regression	3.394	1	3.394	3.558	.063	Not Significant
	Residual	67453.465	293	230.217			
	Total	67456.859	294				

Dependent Variable: Male and Female Academic Achievement in Mathematics
Predictor: (Constant), Study Habits of Male and Female Students

The regression ANOVA test of significance presented in Table 4 showed that the p-value for male students was .000, which was less than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant prediction of academic achievement in Mathematics by study habits among male students was rejected. This meant that male students' study habits significantly predicted their academic achievement in Mathematics. For female students, the p-value was .063, which was greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected for female students. This meant that female students' study habits did not significantly predict their academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students in Anambra State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study revealed that study habits had a low positive predictive value on academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students in Anambra State. The R^2 value of .014 showed that study habits accounted for 1.4% of the variance in students' academic

achievement in Mathematics. Although the predictive value was low, the result was statistically significant. This indicated that students' study habits contributed meaningfully to their academic achievement, even though other variables not included in the model accounted for a larger proportion of the variance. This finding might have resulted from the fact that study habits influence how students organise learning, revise lessons, prepare for assignments and examinations, and manage academic tasks. Students who develop regular study routines are more likely to revise Mathematics concepts, practise problem-solving procedures and retain information. On the other hand, students who lack effective study habits may find it difficult to recall formulas, solve problems accurately and prepare adequately for tests. The finding supports Nwizuzu (2024), who reported a positive relationship between students' study habits and academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students in Anambra State. It also agrees with Mgbike and Anyamene (2024), who found that study habits predicted academic achievement among secondary school students in English Language in Anambra State.

The result further supports Okoli and Anyamene (2024), who reported that study habits predicted academic achievement among upper basic education students in Business Studies. Similarly, Mukherjee and Pal (2024) found that study habits were related to the academic achievement of higher secondary students. These studies suggest that students' learning behaviour outside direct classroom instruction plays an important role in academic performance. However, the low level of prediction found in the present study shows that study habits alone may not fully explain students' achievement in Mathematics. Other factors such as motivation, teacher effectiveness, parental support, school environment, previous knowledge, self-efficacy and socio-economic background may also influence academic achievement.

The finding of the study also revealed that male students' study habits accounted for 9.9% of the variance in their academic achievement in Mathematics, while female students' study habits accounted for only 1.0% of the variance. This shows that study habits had stronger predictive value among male students than among female students. The finding may be because male and female students differ in the ways they organise study time, approach Mathematics tasks, respond to academic pressure and use available learning support. Male students whose study habits are more structured may benefit more directly from regular practice and independent study in Mathematics. Female students' achievement, on the other hand, may be influenced more strongly by other factors not captured in the model, such as classroom support, confidence, peer interaction, parental encouragement or affective variables.

Furthermore, the finding revealed that male students' study habits significantly predicted their academic achievement in Mathematics, whereas female students' study habits did not significantly predict their academic achievement. This finding suggests that gender may moderate the predictive influence of study habits on academic achievement. The result agrees partly with studies that reported gender-related variations in study habits and academic

achievement. Shabayang, Bahago and Gotip (2025) reported that gender can influence students' study habits, while Nwizuzu (2024) found that study habits had positive relationships with academic achievement among both male and female students, though the strength of relationship differed. The present finding, however, differs from studies that reported stronger or significant effects among female students. The difference may be due to variations in location, subject area, instrument, population and method of analysis.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that study habits are significant predictors of academic achievement in Mathematics among public secondary school students in Anambra State. The findings revealed that study habits made a low positive contribution to explaining variation in students' academic achievement. This suggests that improving students' study habits is likely to support better academic achievement, although study habits alone cannot account for all differences in students' performance. The study also concluded that gender influenced the predictive value of study habits. Male students' study habits significantly predicted their academic achievement in Mathematics, while female students' study habits did not significantly predict their achievement. This implies that interventions designed to improve study habits should take gender-related learning needs into consideration.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher proffers the following recommendations:

1. The Anambra State Ministry of Education, in collaboration with school administrators, should integrate structured study-skills training into the secondary school curriculum. Such training should focus on time management, note-taking, revision planning, concentration and memorisation techniques.
2. School counsellors should organise regular orientation programmes and counselling sessions on effective study habits for SS2 students. These sessions should help students identify poor study behaviours and replace them with productive routines.
3. Mathematics teachers should encourage students to practise Mathematics regularly, review class notes after lessons and maintain organised exercise books. Teachers should also monitor students' study routines through assignments, revision tasks and guided practice.
4. Parents should provide a supportive home environment that encourages regular study. This includes providing a quiet study space, monitoring study time and reducing distractions that may affect students' concentration.

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