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STUDY HABIT DIMENSIONS AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IMO STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study examined study habit dimensions as predictors of academic achievement in English language among senior secondary school students in Imo State, Nigeria. Six specific aspects of study habits; items on book, note-taking, memory, test preparation, concentration, and time management, were investigated to determine their individual contributions to students' academic achievement. The study adopted a correlational research design. A sample of 1,674 senior secondary school students was selected through multi-stage sampling from public schools in the three educational zones of Imo State. Data were collected using a validated Study Habit Inventory (SHI) adapted from Bakare (1997), while students' English Language scores served as the measure of academic achievement. Data were collected through direct delivery approach and analysed using multiple regression and t-test statistics. Findings revealed that the items on book, concentration, and time management dimensions significantly predicted students' academic achievement in English Language, whereas note-taking, memory, and test preparation showed non-significant relationships. Specifically, engagement with textbooks, focused attention, and effective time planning were strong contributors to students' achievement. The study concluded that not all dimensions of study habits exert equal influence on academic success. It was recommended that teachers, school counsellors, and parents should help students develop effective study strategies that enhance concentration, structured time management, and active engagement with learning materials.

Keywords: Study Habits; Academic Achievement; English Language; Concentration; Time Management.

Introduction

Academic achievement among secondary school students remains a major concern for educators, policymakers, and parents in Nigeria. Despite various educational reforms and interventions, the problem of poor academic achievement persists, particularly in key subjects such as English Language. English, being the official language of communication and the medium of instruction in Nigerian schools, plays a crucial role in students' academic progression and social integration (Anyaegbu, 2024; Ijeoma, Ogechi, Onyinyechi & Ngozi, 2024). Yet, many secondary school students in Imo State continue to perform poorly in the subject, as reflected in recent national examinations where the state ranked 31st in the national WASSCE performance chart (Imo Trumpeta, 2022). This underperformance suggests that certain underlying factors; such as students' study habits, may

significantly contribute to their academic difficulties.

Academic achievement generally refers to the extent to which learners attain their educational goals as measured through tests, grades, or other evaluation criteria. It reflects the outcomes of learning and students' ability to demonstrate mastery of specific knowledge, skills, and competencies (Agulanna & Onukogu, 2012). In the context of this study, academic achievement is defined as students' performance in English Language, particularly as it relates to their ability to comprehend, communicate effectively, and express ideas through speaking and writing. English Language achievement goes beyond mere grades; it reflects students' mastery of the four core language skills; listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which are essential for success in all other school subjects that use English as the medium of instruction (Anyaegbu, 2024; Ijeoma, Ogechi, Onyinyechi & Ngozi, 2024). However, students' ability to perform well in these aspects of English is largely influenced by their study habits, which determine how effectively they engage with learning materials, practise language skills, and consolidate classroom learning. Good study habits such as consistent reading, active note-taking, regular vocabulary development, and practice in essay writing foster better comprehension and language fluency (Ebele & Olofu, 2017; Burns & Sinfield, 2022). Conversely, poor study habits; such as cramming before examinations, lack of reading discipline, and minimal practice in writing or speaking, often result in weak vocabulary, poor comprehension, and grammatical inaccuracies that hinder academic success in English (Carew & Tukur, 2024; Dagogo, 2023).

Furthermore, effective study habits promote independent learning, which is particularly critical in English Language acquisition. Students who develop self-directed reading routines, summarise texts, and seek to understand new words are more likely to internalise language structures and apply them effectively in communication (Cottrell, 2024; Oyasola & Adegoke, 2022). In contrast, learners who depend solely on classroom instruction without engaging in personal study tend to struggle with comprehension and written expression. Thus, academic achievement in English Language can be seen as a direct reflection of students' study discipline and learning approach. When students adopt strategic study habits; such as setting study goals, managing time effectively, revising notes, and practising language exercises, they improve both their linguistic competence and academic performance. On the other hand, weak or inconsistent study habits can limit exposure to language use and reduce opportunities for meaningful learning, resulting in lower achievement levels (Adedokun, Ajibade, Popoola & Babatunde, 2020; Kohansal, Poorsaadat, Almasi & Habibi, 2023). Therefore, in this study, students' academic achievement in English Language is not only an indicator of their cognitive ability but also a reflection of the quality and consistency of their study habits.

Study habit refers to the regular pattern of behaviour adopted by learners to facilitate effective learning and retention of information (Burns & Sinfield, 2022). Empirical evidence suggests that study habits, such as time management,

concentration, note-taking, and reading strategies can predict students' academic outcomes across disciplines (Adedokun, Ajibade, Popoola & Babatunde, 2020; Oyasola & Adegoke, 2022). For instance, Ebele and Olofu (2017) found that students with well-organized study routines performed significantly better than their peers who lacked structured study habits. Similarly, Carew and Tukur (2024) emphasized that regular study schedules and self-discipline enhance comprehension and retention, leading to improved academic achievements. However, many Nigerian secondary school students, including those in Imo State, have the tendency to exhibit poor study behaviours; such as procrastination, inadequate reading culture, and overreliance on rote memorization, which limit their academic potential (Dagogo, 2023; Ohuakanwa, 2023). These challenges are further compounded by distractions from digital media, peer influence, and poor learning environments (Cayubit, 2021). The situation has become more worrisome in the English Language, where students' weak vocabulary, limited reading comprehension, and inability to construct coherent sentences have been consistently reported (Anyaegbu, 2024; Onuigbo, 2018).

Study habits consist of dimensions such as note-taking, memory, time management, concentration, and test preparation, each exerting distinct predictive effects on academic performance. Effective note-taking enhances comprehension and retention, supporting better recall during examinations (Burns & Sinfield, 2022). Similarly, time management allows students to allocate adequate periods for study and rest, improving productivity and outcomes (Carew & Tukur, 2024). Concentration promotes deeper engagement and reduces distractions, fostering meaningful learning (Adedokun et al., 2020). Memory skills facilitate the retrieval of learned information, while systematic test preparation strengthens confidence and reduces anxiety during assessments (Clarke et al., 2024). According to Nwadiani (2024), students who develop balanced habits across these domains are more likely to perform consistently well academically due to enhanced learning efficiency and self-regulation.

Despite growing literature on factors influencing students' academic performance, many studies have focused on general achievement or science-related subjects (Adedokun et al., 2020; Ebele & Olofu, 2017), with limited attention given to study habit dimensions as predictors of achievements in English Language. Few existing studies in Imo State, such as those by Anyaegbu (2024) and Ijeoma et al. (2024), examined teaching strategies rather than students' internal learning behaviours. Furthermore, available research often treats study habit as a single construct without disaggregating its dimensions; such as note-taking, memories, time management, concentration, and test preparation which may have different predictive effects on performance. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by examining study habit dimensions as predictors of academic performance in English Language among senior secondary school students in Imo State. The study is significant as it will provide empirical evidence on which aspects of study behaviour most strongly influence English Language achievement, thereby guiding educators, counsellors, and

policymakers in designing targeted interventions to improve students' academic outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

English Language remains a core subject in the Nigerian secondary school curriculum and a compulsory requirement for admission into higher institutions. It serves not only as a subject of study but also as the medium of instruction across all other disciplines. Despite its importance, students' performance in English Language in Nigeria, and particularly in Imo State, has continued to decline over the years. Reports from the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) indicate persistent low passes and widespread weaknesses in key areas such as comprehension, vocabulary development, and written expression. This poor performance poses a serious threat to students' academic progression, employability, and overall communicative competence.

Several interventions, ranging from teacher training to curriculum reforms, have been introduced to improve students' achievement in English, yet the outcomes remain largely unsatisfactory. While many studies have focused on factors such as teaching methods, school environment, and parental influence, relatively little attention has been given to students' study habits, which constitute the foundation of effective learning. Observations and informal interviews with teachers reveal that many students in Imo State secondary schools show poor study attitudes, lack proper time management, and rely on last-minute cramming before examinations. These habits limit their comprehension and hinder long-term retention of language skills necessary for academic success. Empirical evidence suggests that the way students plan, organise, and regulate their learning strongly influences their academic outcomes. However, most existing research treats study habit as a single, undifferentiated construct, overlooking its multidimensional nature; including aspects such as note-taking, memory, time management, concentration, and test preparation. Consequently, there is insufficient understanding of which specific dimensions of study habit best predict academic achievement in English Language among senior secondary school students in Imo State. This gap in knowledge raises a fundamental question: To what extent do study habit dimensions predict students' academic achievement in English Language? Addressing this question is crucial for designing effective guidance and counselling interventions that foster better learning behaviours and enhance English Language achievement. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the predictive relationship between study habit dimensions and academic achievement in English Language among senior secondary school students in Imo State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine study habit dimensions as predictors of academic performance in English Language among senior secondary school students in Imo State.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine Items on Book as predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.
2. Determine the extent to which note-taking predicts students' academic achievement in English Language.

3. Examine time management as predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.
4. Assess the predictive relationship between concentration and students' academic achievement in English Language.
5. Investigate the extent to which memory predicts students' academic performance in English Language.
6. Determine how test preparation predicts students' academic achievement in English Language.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does Items on Book predict students' academic achievement in English Language?
2. To what extent does note-taking predict students' academic performance in English Language?
3. To what extent does memories predict students' academic performance in English Language?
4. To what extent does test preparation predict students' academic performance in English Language?
5. To what extent does concentration predict students' academic performance in English Language?
6. To what extent does time management predict students' academic performance in English Language?

Hypotheses

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

1. Items on Book is not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.
2. Note-taking not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.
3. Memories not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.
4. Test preparation not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.
5. Concentration not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.
6. Time management not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.

Methods

The study adopted a predictive correlational survey research design. The research was conducted in Imo State, located in the South-East of Nigeria, an area recognised for its educational advancement but faced with structural and psychological challenges within its school system. The population comprised all Senior Secondary School II (SS2) students in co-educational public secondary schools across the six education zones of Imo State, totalling 27,050 students (13,260 males and 13,790 females). A sample of 772 students was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique that involved purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling to ensure proportional representation by zone and gender.

Two instruments were used for data collection: the Study Habit Inventory (Bakare, 1997), and students' academic records in English Language. These instruments measured study habits, and academic achievement, respectively. A pilot study involving 30 students established reliability, yielding Cronbach's

alpha coefficients of 0.81 for the study habit inventory, indicating good internal consistency. Data were collected in person over two weeks by trained research assistants who administered the questionnaires in selected schools after obtaining consent and institutional permission. Completed questionnaires were retrieved immediately to prevent loss. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) summarised students' responses, while simple and multiple regression analyses determined the predictive effects of study habits on academic achievement. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Regression analysis on various dimensions of study habits on the academic achievement of SS2 students in English Language

Dimensions of SHs	Beta	df	Cal. t	P<0.05	Remark
Items on Book	0.088	1672	3.270	0.001	S
Note Taking	-0.014		-0.546	0.585	NS
Memories	0.004		0.134	0.893	NS
Test Preparation	0.060		1.843	0.066	NS
Concentration	0.069		2.416	0.016	S
Time Management	0.067		2.312	0.021	S

Research Question 1: To what extent does Items on Book predicts students' academic achievement in English Language?

Table 1 shows that secondary school students' items on book aspect of study habits had Beta of -0.088. This indicates that secondary school students' items on book aspect of study habits contributed only 8.8 percent of their achievement scores in English language.

Hypothesis 1: Items on Book is not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.

Also, at 1df numerator, 1672df denominator and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated t3.262 with P-value 0.001 which is less than the 0.05, the first aspect of the first null hypothesis is not accepted. Therefore, secondary school students' items on book aspect of study habits is a significant predictor of their achievement scores in English language.

Research Question 2: To what extent does note-taking predict students' academic performance in English Language?

Findings in Table 4 shows that secondary school students' note taking aspect of study habits had Beta of -0.014. This indicates that secondary school students' note taking aspect of study habits contributed only 1.4 percent of their achievement scores in English language.

Hypothesis 2: Note taking is not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.

Also, at 1df numerator, 1672df denominator and 0.05 level of significant,

the calculated t0.584 with P-value 0.583 which is greater than the 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, secondary school students' note taking aspect of study habits is not a significant predictor of their achievement scores in English language.

Research Question 3: To what extent does memories predict students' academic performance in English Language?

Table 1 further reveals that secondary school students' memories aspect of study habits had Beta of 0.004. This indicates that secondary school students' memories aspect of study habits contributed only 0.4 percent of their achievement scores in English language.

Hypothesis 3: Memories is not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.

Also, at 1df numerator, 1672df denominator and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated t0.134 with P-value 0.893 which is greater than the 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, secondary school students' memories aspect of study habits is not a significant predictor of their achievement scores in English language.

Research Question 4: To what extent does test preparation predict students' academic performance in English Language?

In Table 1 it was observed that secondary school students' test preparation aspect of study habits had Beta of 0.060. This indicates that secondary school students' test preparation aspect of study habits contributed only 6.0 percent of their achievement scores in English language.

Hypothesis 4: Test preparation is not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.

Also, at 1df numerator, 1672df denominator and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated t1.843 with P-value 0.066 which is greater than the 0.05, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, secondary school students' test preparation aspect of study habits is not a significant predictor of their achievement scores in English language.

Research Question 5: To what extent does concentration predict students' academic performance in English Language?

Table 1 further shows that secondary school students' concentration aspect of study habits had Beta of 0.068. This indicates that secondary school students' concentration aspect of study habits contributed only 6.8 percent of their achievement scores in English language.

Hypothesis 5: Concentration is not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.

Also, at 1df numerator, 1672df denominator and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated t2.191 with P-value 0.029 which is less than the 0.05, the null hypothesis is not accepted. Therefore, secondary school students' concentration aspect of study habits is a significant predictor of their achievement scores in English language.

Research Question 6: To what extent does time management predict students' academic performance in English Language?

Finally, Table 4 indicates that secondary school students' time management aspect of study habits had Beta of 0.066. This indicates that secondary school students' time management aspect of study habits contributed 6.6 percent of their achievement scores in English language.

Hypothesis 6: Time management is not a significant predictor of students' academic achievement in English Language.

Also, at 1df numerator, 1672df denominator and 0.05 level of significant, the calculated t2.229 with P-value 0.026 which is less than the 0.05, the null hypothesis is not accepted. Therefore, secondary school students' time management aspect of study habits is a significant predictor of their achievement scores in English language.

Discussion

The findings of this study revealed that different aspects of study habits made varying contributions to secondary school students' achievement in English language. Hence, the study concluded that students' engagement with textbooks and written materials significantly predicted their English language achievement. This finding aligns with Adedokun et al. (2020) and Ebele and Olofu (2017), who reported that consistent textbook reading and review enhance comprehension and academic success. The finding is also supported by Burns and Sinfield (2022) and Cottrell (2024), who argued that effective reading and summarising of textbook content develop better conceptual understanding. However, it differs from Carew and Tukur (2024), who found that students' textbook reading patterns had little direct influence on performance due to poor reading motivation and lack of comprehension skills.

The findings from the study revealed that the note-taking aspect of study habits had a non-significant relationship with students' performance in English language. This means that students' note-taking behaviour did not play a major role in predicting their academic success in the subject. One possible reason for this result is that many students tend to copy notes from the board or from teachers without paying attention to understanding the content or reviewing the notes later. In many classroom settings, note-taking is often treated as a mechanical task rather than an active learning strategy. When students do not engage critically with what they write, the potential benefits of note-taking for comprehension and recall are lost. This finding disagrees with the results of Clarke et al. (2024) and Jafari et al. (2019), who found that effective and well-organised note-taking improves students' retention, comprehension, and academic achievement. Their studies emphasised that summarising information, identifying key ideas, and reviewing notes regularly strengthen understanding. However, the present finding supports the results of Dagogo (2023) and Oyasola and Adegoke (2022), who reported that note-taking alone, without follow-up revision and active engagement with the material, has little or no influence on students' learning outcomes. This suggests that the quality and use of notes are more important than the act of taking them.

The study also found that the memory aspect of study habits recorded a non-significant relationship with students' performance in English language. This implies that the ability to memorise information did not strongly predict

students' achievement. English language learning, by its nature, involves comprehension, analysis, interpretation, and the practical application of grammar and vocabulary rather than rote memorisation. Therefore, students who rely mainly on memorisation may not perform well in areas that require understanding, creativity, or problem-solving. This finding agrees with the studies of Miyatsu et al. (2018) and Deslauriers et al. (2019), who stressed that deep learning strategies; such as understanding concepts, connecting ideas, and applying knowledge, are more effective for long-term learning than surface memorisation. However, the present result differs from that of Quílez-Robres et al. (2021), who found that short-term memory plays an important role in academic success among younger learners, particularly at the elementary level. The difference may be explained by the fact that younger children depend more on recall in early learning stages, while older students, such as those in secondary or tertiary education, require higher-order cognitive skills.

Furthermore, the test preparation aspect of study habits also showed a non-significant relationship with students' English language performance. This indicates that students' methods of preparing for examinations did not significantly influence their achievement. One likely reason is that many students adopt ineffective revision methods, such as cramming shortly before tests, focusing only on likely exam questions, or studying under pressure without planning. Such approaches often lead to shallow learning and poor retention of knowledge. The result contradicts the findings of Rabia et al. (2017) and Mahwish et al. (2017), who discovered that consistent and systematic test preparation positively correlates with higher academic performance. Their studies suggested that students who plan their revision over time and review materials regularly tend to perform better. However, the finding of the present study agrees with the results of Dagogo (2023) and Eva et al. (2023), who noted that many students study only close to the examination period and do not apply effective preparation strategies such as self-testing, time management, or spaced repetition. This highlights the importance of developing better test preparation habits among students.

In contrast, the concentration aspect of study habits showed a significant relationship with students' performance in English language. This means that students who were able to maintain focus, avoid distractions, and concentrate during study sessions tended to perform better in English. Concentration is essential for effective learning, as it allows students to process information deeply and retain it for longer periods. Students who manage their study environments; by reducing noise, organising their materials, and setting clear goals, are more likely to sustain attention and perform well. This result aligns with the findings of Nwadiani (2024) and Cayubit (2021), who reported that concentration and control of study conditions significantly enhance learning outcomes. Similarly, Mamnoun et al. (2023) and Raković et al. (2022) found that sustained attention promotes deep cognitive processing, comprehension, and problem-solving. The significant link between concentration and performance suggests that improving students' ability to focus during learning may lead to higher

achievement in English and possibly in other subjects as well. Thus, the results indicate that not all aspects of study habits contribute equally to students' academic success in English language. While note-taking, memory, and test preparation did not show significant influence, concentration proved to be an important factor. This highlights the idea that effective learning goes beyond routine academic activities. It requires focus, understanding, and meaningful engagement with learning materials.

Finally, the time management aspect showed a significant relationship. This finding suggests that students who effectively planned and organised their study time performed better in English language. This is in strong agreement with Adedokun et al. (2020), Oyasola and Adegoke (2022), and Clarke et al. (2024), who found that effective time management promotes consistent study patterns and improved academic outcomes. However, it differs slightly from Carew and Tukur (2024), who observed that some students with good time management still underperform due to lack of focus and motivation. These findings reinforce the view that academic success depends more on quality study engagement, focused attention, and effective time planning than on routine or surface-level study practices.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that different aspects of students' study habits varied in their level of influence on academic achievement in English Language among secondary school students in Imo State. The results revealed that out of the six components of study habits examined: items on book, note-taking, memory, test preparation, concentration, and time management; only items on book, concentration, and time management significantly predicted students' achievement in English Language.

Recommendations

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

1. Teachers and school counsellors should guide students on how to organise, read, and use their study materials effectively. Proper engagement with textbooks, notebooks, and reference materials can improve comprehension and performance in English Language.

2. Classroom environments should be structured to minimise distractions and enhance students' focus during learning. Teachers can adopt interactive and engaging teaching methods that sustain students' attention and interest in English Language.

3. Schools should include time management training in study skills or guidance programmes. Counsellors can conduct workshops to help students plan their study schedules, prioritise academic tasks, and balance schoolwork with extracurricular activities.

4. English Language teachers should model good study practices—such as effective note-taking, summarising key points, and review techniques—within their lessons to help students develop better academic habits.

5. Periodic seminars and orientation sessions should be held to educate students on the importance of concentration, consistent study routines, and effective use of academic resources.

6. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with school authorities, should design intervention programmes that strengthen students' study habits, particularly in areas found to significantly influence academic achievement—namely concentration, time management, and book use.

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