

Relationships of Gender's Study Habits and Attitude towards Examinations among Secondary School Students in Ondo State

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between the study habits of male and female secondary school students and their attitudes toward examinations in Ondo State. The non-experimental research design of the descriptive survey type was adopted for this study. Five hundred and forty (540) secondary school students in Ondo State were randomly selected for the study. An instrument called Study Habits and Attitudes of Secondary School Students toward Examinations Questionnaire (SHASSSEQ) was used to collect data on students' study habits and attitudes towards examinations. A reliability test coefficient of 0.76 was used to collect data for the study. The data collected were analyzed using frequency count and percentage score. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Findings revealed that the attitudes of male and female secondary school students towards examination are influenced by their study habits. Based on these findings, it was recommended that for effective change in students' study behaviour, Counsellors have to improve on their interaction with students. At the primary school level proper orientation about good study habits ought to begin.

Keywords: Attitude, examination, gender, study habits

Introduction

Education may be a medium through which the yearning and aspiration of the country can be met. This explains why the Federal, State and Local Governments are budgeting a certain proportion of their revenue on education. Education remains the most important and powerful tool to shape and mould the behaviour of individuals. Osuafor (2013) noted that education is aimed at producing a whole man/woman; an individual who is not only knowledgeable but can also translate this knowledge into action for his/her benefit and the society at large.

Adebule (2004) asserted that the rate of compromise and the fallen standard of education in Nigeria are alarming. The investment of government on education is considered by stakeholders not to be yielding the desired result. Yahaya (2012) also opined that churches and religious people hold the view that educational standard is declining because of the rise in dishonesty, examination malpractices and other social vices. Asikhia (2010) equally stated that teachers neglected inculcating good study habits and positive attitudes towards examination in the students for nitpicking on students' low performance at both internal and external examination. However, Gettinger and Seibert (2002) considered good study habits as an antidote to failure within the educational institutions. According to Gettinger and Seibert, studying tends to increase a student's scholastic ability. The level at which our students are aware of how to study and prepare for examinations will determine the attainment of the objectives set by the National Policy on Education.

Anikweze (2013) described assessment to include teacher, peer and self-assessment process where the aim is to build up new models of evaluation geared toward fostering life-long skills. Olutola and Dosumu (2016) defined assessment as a major instrument in the process of appraising students' achievement in the school system. One of the means of assessing students is through the use of examination. By passing an examination, a student obtains an identity of being successful.

Examination has become one of the most powerful weapons of the school system and passing remains paramount in every candidate's mind. Emphasis on the intelligence test scores has been responsible for the drastic decline in Nigerian students' academic progress in the recent past because little or no effort has been made to other prospect influencing the students' performance in examinations. Olutola and Dosumu (2016) stressed that students achievement is important in the school system and any variable that can make or mar this must be investigated.

Study habits form a very crucial aspect of the learning process. This is because skills of study habits may affect male and female students positively or negatively in Nigerian schools. The term study habits assume that the students already had basic capability in reading and study skills. Good study habits, for instance, completion of assignments, using good time table for studying, reading and note taking, study period and location, concentration, using previous question for practicing and application of examination skills are initial prerequisites for academic excellence of any student in an examination. However, it is ironic that many students do not have these skills and therefore perform poorly in examinations. In other words, students with poor study habits have the likelihood to fail compared with students who have good study skills.

According to Kilmer (2009), study habit has to do with having a devoted, scheduled and un-interrupted time and disciplining oneself in order to achieve a learning task. Yahaya (2003) described study habit as chains of studying acts that students undertake to enhance their learning and assimilation of a subject. It is the students' ways of studying a subject which may either be organized or unorganized, efficient or inefficient. In other words, a good study habits improve students' performance, provide good grades and better students/teachers relationship and enhances sense of competence and confidence. Without it, students will be self-limiting in life. Haleh, Abbas and Alireza (2019) emphasized that both male and female students need to adopt good study skills when learning a subject.

Lawrence (2014) posited that there is no significant difference between study habits and academic attainment of male and female secondary schools students. Similarly, Singh (2011) stated that there is relationship between study habit and academic achievement of basic secondary and college students their gender notwithstanding. Aman deep and Raji (2015) also noted that there is significant relationship between study habits and students academic achievement. Al-Maqtri (2018) revealed that students, who plan for their studies, take notes in class and participate in class activities usually perform better. On the contrary, those who do not study regularly, missed classes, fail to take notes and plan for their studies are usually underachievers.

Reading among the expected roles of the students has not been accorded the necessary priority. Stakeholders in the education industry has expressed their feelings about several students who abandon their school work to go for partying, gambling, smoking and loitering around the streets. They visit the classroom at the beginning of the term, disappear and reappear towards the end of the term to write the examination. The paradox of it is that it is not limited to a particular gender. Since the students' minds are not in the academic programme that can improve their knowledge, they only give what they have or try other negative ways to succeed during examinations.

Al-Maqtri (2018) stated that majority of the students, boys in particular devoted less time to their study, never take notes, fail to plan their study time and just take examinations. It was further revealed that majority of the male students pretend to study alone in their rooms and rarely study in the library. Poor study habits, coupled with recent criteria for admission into higher institutions and negative attitude towards examination appears to have contributed immensely to the spread of all forms of examination malpractices in Nigeria. The purpose of examination malpractice to the students especially at the secondary level of education is to pass and secure admission into tertiary institutions.

According to Ugwu (2012) examination malpractice is an intentional wrong-doing which is against the examination rules that places the candidate at an undue advantage. The menace has been difficult to curb because virtually all citizens have been involved in it. Many students now have a negative orientation of the impossibility of obtaining the grade

point that will make them secure admission into higher institutions without malpractices. The rage for certificate now leads secondary school leavers to obtain dysfunctional certificates.

Inconsistency in government policy as well as weak political will is not helping the situation. This is because initiatives by stakeholders in the educational sector to curb the menace have been strangled severally to death as reported by Oyekanmi (2011). The education system urgently needs education expertise which will re-orientate both male and female secondary school leavers before proceeding to the higher institutions.

Gender issues in relation to academic performance have become a global discussion. Gender, according to Ambe-Uva, Iwuchukwu and Jibrin (2008), refers to the social meanings associated with being a male or a female. Both male and female students are affected by physical environment and their individual difference (Imasuen & Omorogbe, 2016). Students' study skills and attitude towards examination is not hereditary but learnt and not limited to a single gender. Because attitudes are learnt by both genders, they can be changed through persuasive talks and attitude changing devices that can be used by professional counsellors. Attitude towards examinations therefore play a major role in determining the level of achievement in school.

Researchers have reported their findings on male and female performances as well as their study habits and attitude towards examinations. Okwo and Otunba (2007) stated that male students performed better in Physics essay test than their female counterpart. Raimi and Adeoye (2002) stated that there is significant difference between male and female students in terms of their performance in Science Subjects. Bhan and Gupta (2010) however found that gender had no significant impact on the study habits and academic performance of students. Haleh, Abbas and Alireza (2019) showed that male and female were not significantly different in their study habits. Oli (2018), Hashemian (2014) and Torabi (2014) did not find any significant difference between the students' gender and study habits. Al-Maqtri (2018) however submitted that female study habits were comparatively better than that of their male counterparts, though the reason for the differences were not obvious.

Rahman (2019) in his study found no significant difference in the attitude of both male and female students and their preparation for examination. Longe and Ajike (2014) discovered students positive attitude towards formal examination. Chrysolyte and Raja (2016) revealed that female in higher secondary school expressed a more favourable attitude towards public examination than their male counterpart. Numan (2017) stated that attitudes on cheating in examinations did not differ between gender among students from physical Education and Sport. However, the level of attitudes towards cheating of male were higher than those of female students as revealed by Lin and Wen (2207),

Hardigan (2004), Akday and Cenk (2002). It is against this background that the study seeks to examine the gender study habits and attitudes toward examinations among secondary school students in Ondo State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. What percentage of male secondary school students are involved in good or poor study habits in Ondo State?
2. What percentage of female secondary school students are involved in good or poor study habits in Ondo State?
3. What is the attitude of male secondary school students toward examinations in Ondo State?
4. What is the attitude of female secondary school students toward examinations in Ondo State?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses guided the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between male secondary school students' study habits and attitudes toward examinations in Ondo State.
2. There is no significant relationship between female secondary school students' study habits and attitudes toward examinations in Ondo State.

Methodology

The study is based on a non experimental research design involving descriptive correlation studies type. The population for the study consisted of all secondary school students in Ondo State. A multistage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. At the first stage, the three senatorial districts in Ondo State were considered. At stage two, simple random sampling technique was used to select nine local Governments from the three senatorial districts. Three Local Governments were selected from each senatorial district. At stage three, nine secondary schools were randomly selected across the nine Local Governments. At stage four, simple random technique was used to select five hundred and forty (540) respondents comprising 190 males and 350 females for the study.

The instrument used for this study is a questionnaire titled “Study Habit and Attitudes of Secondary School Students toward Examinations Questionnaire” (SHASSSEQ) developed by the researcher. Section B of the instrument was adapted from the study habit inventory developed by Bakare (1977). The validity of the questionnaire was obtained by

giving the instrument to test experts in University of Ilorin and Ekiti State University and was regarded to have content validity. To estimate the reliability of the instrument, a test-retest reliability estimating method was used by administering the instrument twice with an interval of two weeks between the first and second administration on a sample of secondary school students that was not part of the study. The reliability index obtained was 0.76. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentage score, test-retest and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The hypotheses generated were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: What percentage of male secondary school students are involved in good or poor study habits in Ondo State?

Table 1: Percentage analysis of male students' study habits

Variables	Good Habits		Poor Habits	
	N	%	N	%
Study Habits	80	42.11	110	57.89

Table 1 shows that 57.89% of the male respondents have poor study habits, while 42.11% have good study habits. It can therefore be stated that about 58% of the respondents have poor study habits.

Research Question 2: What percentage of female secondary school students are involved in good or poor study habits in Ondo State?

Table 2:
Percentage analysis of female students' study habits

Variables	Good Habits		Poor Habits	
	N	%	N	%
Study Habits	145	41.43	205	58.57

Table 2 shows that 58.57% of the female respondents have poor study habits, while 41.43% have good study habits. It can therefore be stated that about 59% of the respondents have poor study skills.

Research Question 3: What is the attitude of male secondary school students toward examinations in Ondo State?

Table 3:

Percentage analysis of male students' attitudes toward examinations

Variables	Positive Attitude		Negative Attitude	
	N	%	N	%
Attitudes toward Examinations	87	45.79	103	54.21

Table 3 indicates that 45.79% of the male respondents have positive attitude towards examinations, while 54.21% have negative attitudes toward examinations. It can therefore be concluded that about 54% of the male respondents have negative attitudes toward examinations.

Research Question 4: What is the attitude of female secondary school students toward examinations in Ondo State?

Table 4:

Percentage analysis of female students' attitudes toward examinations

Variables	Positive Attitude		Negative Attitude	
	N	%	N	%
Attitudes toward Examinations	167	47.71	183	52.29

Table 4 indicates that 47.71% of the female respondents have positive attitude toward examinations, while 52.29% have negative attitude toward examinations. It can therefore be concluded that about 52% of the respondents have negative attitude toward examinations.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between male secondary school students' study habits and attitudes toward examinations in Ondo State.

Table 5:

Test of significant relationship of male students study habits and attitudes towards examinations

Variable	N	Df	Cal r-value	Critical r-value
Study Habits	190	189	0.333*	0.195
Attitudes toward Examinations	190			

Note: * = Correlation is Significant at 0.05 alpha level (p<0.05)

Table 5 present data on the relationship between male students study habits and their attitudes toward examinations. The calculated r-value of 0.333 is greater than the critical r-value. With this correlation index, the hypothesis which states no significant relationship between study habits and attitudes toward examinations of male secondary school students in Ondo State was rejected. This invariably means that the study habits of male secondary school students in Ondo State influence their attitudes toward examinations.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between female secondary school students' study habits and attitudes toward examinations in Ondo State

Table 6:

Test of significant relationship of female students study habits and attitude toward examinations

Variable	N	Df	Cal r-value	Critical r-value
Study Habits	350	349	0.287*	0.195
Attitudes toward Examinations	350			

Note:* = Correlation is Significant at 0.05 alpha level ($p < 0.05$)

Table 6 present data on the relationship between study habits of female students and their attitudes toward examinations. The result on this table indicates that the variables of study habits and attitudes toward examinations were positively correlated among the female students in Ondo State. This is because the calculated r-value of 0.287 is greater than the critical r-value. The hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between study habits and attitudes toward examinations of female secondary school students in Ondo State was therefore rejected. This invariably means that study habits of female secondary school students in Ondo State influence their attitudes toward examinations.

Discussion

The percentage analysis of the male respondents on study habits and attitude toward examinations reveals that majority of the male secondary school students in Ondo State do not have good study skills and positive attitudes toward examinations. This confirms the assertion by Amandeep and Raji (2015) that there is high significant relationship between study habits and students academic achievement. This result may be because the students' knowledge of good study habits and positive attitudes toward examinations is low.

The result on table 5 shows that there was a significant relationship between male secondary school students study habits and attitudes toward examinations in Ondo State. The result reveals that the study habits of male students in Ondo State have a relationship with the attitudes they dispose toward examinations. The above findings agreed with Al-Maqtri (2018) assertion that majority of the students, boys in particular devoted less time to their study, never took notes, fail to plan their study time and just take examinations.

The result on table 6 shows that there was a significant relationship between female secondary school students study habits and attitudes toward examinations in Ondo State. This finding reveals that the study habits of female students in Ondo State have a correlation with the attitudes they have toward examinations. The above finding agrees with Yahaya (2003) findings, which states that female secondary school students are not significantly different in their study habits and attitude toward examinations.

Conclusion

The study examined gender study habits and attitudes toward examinations among secondary school students in Ondo State. The findings revealed that majority of the male and female secondary school students in Ondo State do not have good study skills and positive attitudes toward examinations. The study concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between male and female students' study habits and attitudes toward examinations. By implication, poor study habits without any doubt is hazardous to the students and their academic pursuit. It is on this fact that parents, teachers, civil society and government must see the need to develop programmes that will motivate the students to develop good study skills.

It is therefore recommended that for effective change in students' study behaviour, Counsellors have to improve on their interaction with students. This can be achieved through specific training organized for the students to help them learn or modify study habits that will improve their academic performance. It is further recommended that at the primary school level proper orientation about good study habits ought to begin.

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