# Study Habits of Senior Secondary School Students and Academic Performance in Rivers State

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**ABSTRACT**
The study investigated study habits of Senior Secondary School Students and their academic performance in Rivers State. The population of the study consisted 1,500 male and female students form four co-educational schools in Port Harcourt, Urban Areas. A simple random sampling technique was used to draw 150 students. The design was survey method. The "General study Habits Scale" (GSHS) was used fro collection of data for the study. A reliability coefficient of 0.67 was obtained, using Spearman Brown Prophecy Formula. Five research questions, and Five null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance, using t-test statistic. The findings revealed that there were significant differences on the responses of male and female students regarding students' time management, motivational level, interest level, class attendance, and note-taking behaviours. Five recommendations were made for implementation: School counsellors should be able to advice and encourage students to manage their study time table of school and home. School counsellors and teachers should apply the principles of positive reinforcement to increase students' motivational level in their study habits. School counsellors should be able to assess students' interest areas in their study habits enhancement. Principals and teachers in secondary schools should enforce mandatory class attendance, at least 75% to qualify to write school examinations. School counsellors and teachers should educate students during orientation to encourage students to improve on their note taking skills.
**Keywords**: School counselors, Academic Performance, Study habits

## INTRODUCTION
Study habits is a household phrase in the mouth of counselors, teachers, parents, students, and scholars; who are concerned with academics advancement of students for nation building, all over the world. Developed and developing countries, all count on academic excellence of student in there various academic endeavors. Every individual experiences challenges with studying at one time to another, and makes diligent efforts to overcome such difficulties.
Then, what is study habit? Effective study habit includes demonstrating high motivation, avoiding distraction, right learning styles with concentration, interest, ability to remember facts studied, and time management. Basically, study habit demonstrates the extent to which the learner engages in routine acts of studying effectively in achieving high performances in examination scores. Reflecting on academic performance, Bashir and Matto (2012, P1) defined academic performance as "the measure of how much knowledge the individual has acquired from school or instruction". Menzel (1982) opined that study habit is the tendency of the learner to learn in a systematic and efficient manner in achieving high scores in examinations. The learner has to devote time and attention to acquire needed information or knowledge from classroom instructions and outside readings.
Shabbir and Rukhsana (2011) conducted a comparison of study habits and academic performance of 200 science students in 10th grade. The t-test analysis of data was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that white British students had significantly better study habits than Pakistani British students; but the academic performance of Pakistani students were concurrent with British students in all measures.

Similarly, Migual and Ksenia (2015) investigated study habits on academic performance of international College students in Shanghai. The findings revealed that most high-performing student were from low-context and individualistic countries, while most low-performing students were from high-context and collectivistic countries. Observations on high performance students revealed that they attended all classes, were on time for class, turn in assignment on time, take notes in class, pay attention in class, did not seem to cheat in class; while low performing students were observed to miss classes; late to class, submit assignment late, did not take notes in class, poor time management, poor English language usage, unable to engage in class discussions, and lack motivation and interest in their studies.

Oluwatimilehin and Owoyele (2012) investigated the relationship between study habits and students' academic achievement on core subjects at the junior secondary school level. In addition, the study determined the relationship between various aspects of study habits including, homework and assignments, time allocation for study, reading and note taking, study period procedures. Findings revealed that:

1) There was a low positive correction between study habits subscales and students' performance in English language,
2) A low positive relationship existed between mathematics and study habits subscales,
3) The significant relationship between science and study habits subscales was low. They concluded that students did not devoted enough time to their academic work, which could be as a result to lack of interest or motivation.

Similarly, Siahi and Maiyo (2015) observe that:

1) Positive relationship was found between study habits and academic achievements.
2) There was a need for teachers and students to make efforts in developing good study habits.

Positive correlation was found in Sherfat and Mirthy (2016) who investigated study habits and academic achievement among junior secondary and senior secondary school students of Mysore City, with a sample of 626 students. Results indicated that:

1) Out of 625 students, 169 of them were poor in study habits.
2) While 444 of them were average in study habits.
3) Students who were high on study habits were also high in academic achievement.
4) The study concluded that study habit is an important correlate of academic achievement among students.

Gudaganavar and Halayannava (2014) investigated the influence of study habits on academic performance of higher Primary School students. The study concluded in their findings that:

1) Both boys and girls differed significantly on preparation for examination; boys performed better than girls.
2) Girls had significantly better reading and note taking habits than boys.
3) That boys had significantly better home environment and planning of work compared to that of girls.
4) There was no significant difference in general habits and attitudes, planning of subjects, habits of concentration and school environment among boys and girls.

Kumar (2015) investigated the perception on study habits of undergraduate students in determining relationship between study habits and academic performance among undergraduate students. A total of 129 students participated in the survey; including, first year, second year, and third year in different courses of study. Findings included that:

1) There was huge decline in average time spent by students in self study per week
2) Majority of students do not receive lecture notes on the same day. Students collaborated in the assignment, despite the assignments were marked as individual assignments.
3) Majority of first year students have low percentage marks in their first semester. Also, majority of high percentage scores were those who asked questions for classification frequently in class during lectures.

Similarly, in another study conducted by Sunetha ancd Mayuri (2001) investigated age and gender differences on factors influencing high academic performance of school pupils. One hundred and twenty pupils were used as sample. Grade levels IX and X were drawn purposively from 10 private schools in

Hyderabad for the study. Results indicated that boys and girls differed significantly in drilling, interaction, sets and language dimensions as measured by study habit inventory.

Acido (2010) investigated high school students' reason skills and their study habits and attitude toward learning, concluded that students who scored above average in reasoning skills take their studies seriously and studied regularly. Nevertheless, students with poor study habits performed poorly in English Language and Mathematics.

**Statement of the Problem**

Studies in the above review (Asikhia, O.A. 2010; Kumar, 2015; Mayuri, 2001; Acido, 2010; Siahi Maiyo, 2015; Sherafat and Murthy, 2016) have indicated that poor study habits affect academic performance of students, both males and females. Several factors have been attributed to variables, such as; study attitudes, study skills, teaching methods, content of study materials, and learning environment. Little or no consideration given to factors, such as: Time Management, motivation, concentration, interest, class attendance, and note taking. These factors were often neglected in comparative analysis among males and females students study habits. Therefore, this study sought to address the problems associated with time management. Motivation, interest, class attendance, and note taking behaviours among secondary school students in Rivers State.

**Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate study habits of male and female senior secondary schools students in Rivers State.

Specific objectives of the study are:
1.    To investigate male and female students' time management in their study habits.
2.    To investigate male and female motivation level in their study habits.
3.    To investigate male and female students' interest level in their study habits.
4.    To investigate male and female students' class attendance level in their study habits.
5.    To investigate male and female students' note taking behaviour in their study habits.

**Research Questions**

The study sought to another the following questions:
1.  To what extent, if any, male and female students differ in time management as a factor in their study habits?
2.  To what extent, if any, male and female students differ in motivation as a factor in their study habits?
3.  To what extent, if any, male and female students differ in interest as a factor in their study habits?
4.  To what extent, if any, male and female students differ in class attendance as a factor in their study habits?
5.  To what extent, if any, male and female students differ in note taking behaviour as a factor in their study habits?

**Null Hypotheses**

For the purpose of this study, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

**HO$_1$**: There is no significant difference between male and female students' time management in their study habits.

**HO$_2$:** There is no significant difference between male and female students' motivational level in their study habits.

**HO$_3$:** There is no significant difference between male and female students' interest level in their study habits.

**HO$_4$:** There is no significant difference between male female students' class attendance rate in their study habits.

**HO$_5$:** There is no significant difference between male and female students' note taking behaviour in their study habits.

**METHODOLOGY**
**Research Design**
This study adopted the descriptive method. The comparative analysis was achieved by means of utilizing t-test statistic for the comparison of mean scores at 0.05 level of significance. While, the research questions were answered by descriptive statistics: Mean and Standard deviation.

**Population and Sample of the Study**
The population of the study includes four (4) co-ed secondary schools; including two private and two public, all in Port Harcourt Local Government Area. A total number of 1,500 students made up of male and female constitutes the population. A simple random sample of 150 students was drawn for the study.

**Instrumentation**
The instrument used for this investigation was the Likert scale which is an interval scale-ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, with numerical values ranging from 4 points to 1 point. The instrument is called "General Study Habits Scale" (GSHS). The instrument (GSHS) has twenty (20) items. A weighted average of 2.5 was accepted for research questions.

**Validation of the Instrument**
The instrument was validated by Experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Faculty of Education, who ascertained the face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined through test-retest method, using Spearman Brown Prophecy Formula. A reliability coefficient of 0.67 was obtained for the study.

**RESULTS**
**Result question 1:** *To what extent, if any, male and female students study differ in time management as a factor in their study habits?*

**Table 1: Mean analysis of male and female students in time management in their study habits.**

| Questionnaire Items | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| • Time management is very important for success | 3.2 | 3.0 |
| • I am organized with my studies | 3.2 | 3.5 |
| • I keep list of things to study daily for better grades | 3.0 | 3.7 |
| • I study daily | 3.2 | 3.6 |

In table 1, Female students demonstrated higher mean scores in time management awareness than male students – Female (13.8) and male (12.4), respectfully.

**Research Question 2:** *To what extent, if any, male and female students differ in motivational level as a factor in their study habits?*

**Table 2: Mean analysis of male and female student in motivational level in their study habits**

| Questionnaire Items | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| • I enjoy having top grades in my studies | 2.5 | 3.0 |
| • Studying stress me | 3.0 | 3.5 |
| • I find reading enjoying | 2.6 | 3.0 |
| • I have other important things to do | 2.5 | 3.00 |

In table 2, female students demonstrated higher mean scores in motivational level in study habits than male with female and male having 12.5 and 10.6 respectively.

**Research Question 3:** *To what extent, if any, male and female students differ in interest level in their study habits?*

**Table 3: Mean analysis of male and female students interest level in their study habits.**

| Questionnaire Items | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| • My interest in my studies improves my grades. | 2.5 | 3.5 |
| • I am interested in my chosen field of study | 2.6 | 3.6 |
| • I study for good grades | 2.5 | 3.0 |
| • Studying is a priority for good grades | 2.5 | 3.7 |

In table 3 above, female students demonstrated higher mean score in interest level in study habits than male students. Female (13.8), which, male (10.1).

**Research Question 4:** *To what extent, if any, male and female students differ in class attendance in their study habits?*

**Table 4: Mean analysis of male and female students class attendance in their study habits.**

| Questionnaire Items | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| • I like attending classes for good grades | 2.4 | 3.8 |
| • Sitting in class is enjoyable to me | 2.3 | 3.4 |
| • Attending classes improve my grades | 2.5 | 3.6 |
| • I listen attentively in class | 3.1 | 3.4 |

In table 4 above, female students demonstrated higher mean scores in class attendance as a factor of study habits than male. Female (14.2), male (10.3) respectfully.

**Research Question 5:** *To what extent, if any, male and female students differ in note taking in class, as a factor of their study habits?*

**Table 5: Mean analysis of male and female students note taking in class**

| Questionnaire Items | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| • I enjoyed note taking in class | 3.5 | 2.5 |
| • Note taking in class improves my grades | 3.6 | 2.7 |
| • Note taking keeps me alert in class | 3.5 | 2.6 |
| • Note taking is a skill I have developed | 2.5 | 2.4 |

In table 5 above, male students demonstrated higher note taking skills in class than female students. Male (13.1), while, female students (10.2) respectfully.

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between male and female students' time management in their study habits.

**Table 6: The t-test analysis of the mean and standard deviation of male and female time management in their study habits**

| Variable | Respondent | Mean | N | STD | DF | P | t-cal | t-crit | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Time management | Male | 12.4 | 75 | 0.92 | 148 | 0.05 | 2.67 | 1.96 | Sig |
| | Female | 13.8 | 75 | 0.90 | | | | | |

The data in table 6 indicated that the calculated t-value on male and female in time management showed significant difference between male and female scores. t-calculated value (2.67), while, critical value (1.96) at degree of freedom, 148. Since t-calculated value is greater than t-critical value, $HO_1$ is rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant difference between male and female students' motivational level in their study habits.

**Table 7: The t-test analysis of mean and standard deviation of male and female students' motivational level their study habits.**

| Variable | Respondent | Mean | N | STD | DF | P | t-cal | t-crit | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motivational level | Male | 10.6 | 75 | 0.91 | 148 | 0.05 | 2.60 | 1.96 | Sig |
| | Female | 12.5 | 75 | 0.90 | | | | | |

The date in table 7 showed that the calculated t-value on male and female motivational level indicated significant difference between male and female mean scores. t-calculated (2.60), while critical t-value (1,96) at 148 degree of freedom. Since t-calculated is greater than critical value, hence, the null hypothesis is rejected at 0,05 level of significance.

**Hypothesis 3:** There is no significant difference between male and female students' interest level in study habits

**Table 8: The t-test analysis of mean and standard deviation of male and female students' interest level in study habits**

| Variable | Respondent | Mean | N | STD | DF | P | t-cal | t-crit | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Variable interest level | Male | 10.1 | 75 | 0.91 | 148 | 0.05 | 2.57 | 1.96 | Sig |
| | Female | 13.5 | 75 | 0.90 | | | | | |

The data in table 8 showed that the calculated t-value of male and female students' interest was greater than the critical value of t at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, $HO_3$ was rejected.

**Hypothesis 4:** There is no significant difference between male and female students' class attendance rate in their study habits.

**Table 9: the t-test showing analysis of mean and std of male and female students' study habits on class Attendance**

| Variable | Respondent | Mean | N | STD | DF | P | t-cal | t-crit | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Class Attendance | Male | 10.03 | 75 | 0.81 | 148 | 0.05 | 2.63 | 1.96 | Sig |
| | Female | 14.02 | 75 | 0.80 | | | | | |

The data in table 9, showed that the mean class attendance rate of female students was greater than that of male (14.02 > 10.03). The t calculated (2.63) > t-critical 1.96; therefore, $HO_4$ rejected.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is no significant difference between male and female students note taking behaviour in their study habits.

**Table 10: The t-test showing Analysis of mean and standard deviation of male and female students in note taking behaviour**.

| Variable | Respondent | Mean | N | STD | DF | P | t-cal | t-crit | Dec |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Note taking behaviour | Male | 13.1 | 75 | 0.90 | 148 | 0.05 | 2.60 | 1.96 | Sig |
| | Female | 10.2 | 75 | 0.93 | | | | | |

The data in table 10 revealed that the mean note taking behaviour of male students was greater than that of female students. Mean score of male (13.01), while mean score of female (10.2), respectfully. The t-calculated (2.60) is > t-critical (1.96) at 0.05 level of confidence. Therefore, $HO_5$ is rejected.

**DISCUSSION**
The response of both male and female students on time management rated time management, as important element of study habits. Most of the students agree that effective time management enhance their grades-male and female 3.0, respectively, on a likert scale. Importance of time management in students' study habits was also confirmed in Shabbir and Ruckhsana (2011); Menzel (1982); Gudaganaval and Halayannava (2014); Lawrence (2014). The findings of this study, als0o was of the opinion that motivation enhances students' study habits. Both male and female students scored motivation is a factor that improves study habits. Mean scores of male (2.5), female (3.5) respectively. These scores were in line with the findings of Mayuri (2001), and Asido (2010). Interest as a factor of students' study habit was supported by both male and female scores-male (2.5), female (3.5). Also, the findings of the study in the variable class attendance and note taking were scored significantly high by female students-mean scores (3.8); while male students (2.4) indicating slightly below the weighted mean for the study.

**CONCLUSION**
Conclusions on the study were based on the findings of the study. These are as follows:
1 There was a significant difference between male and female students' time management in their study habits.
2 There was a significant different between male and female students' motivational level in their study habits.
3 There was a significant difference between male and female students' interest level in their study habits.
4 There was a significant difference between male and female students class attendance behaviour in the study habits.
5 There was a significant difference between male and female students' note taking behaviour in their study habits.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**
Based on the findings of this investigation, the following recommendations were presented for implementation:
1 School counsellors should be able to advice and encourage students to manage their study time table of school and home.
2 School counsellors and teachers should apply the principles of positive reinforcement to increase students' motivational level in their study habits.
3 School counsellors should be able to assess students' interest areas in their study habits enhancement.
4 Principals and teachers in secondary schools should enforce mandatory class attendance, at least 75% to qualify to write school examinations.
5 School counsellors and teachers should educate students during orientation to encourage students to improve on their note taking skills.

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