



The Relationship between Upper Basic Pupils' Study Habits and Their Academic Performance in English Language

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author RAN designed the study and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors BUCU and ACO the protocol and performed the statistical analyses of the study and developed the literature review and general corrections. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at investigating the relationship between upper basic pupils' study habits and their academic performance in English Language in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. In order to achieve the objective of this study, three null hypotheses were formulated based on the research questions. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. A sample of two hundred (200) respondents was randomly selected from a population of 4,372 pupils in the study area. Data collection instrument was a

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questionnaire titled Study Habit Questionnaire (SHQ) and achievement test in English language to measure pupil's performance. The data was further analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis Technique. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result of the analyses indicated that group reading, individual reading and note taking habit had a significant relationship with pupil's academic performance in English Language. The null hypotheses were therefore rejected based on the findings. It was therefore recommended that teachers should encourage pupils to study individually or in groups through quiz, debates and taking of notes. Also the government on its part should provide the needed learning facilities that will create room for developing effective study habits.

Keywords: Group reading; academic performance; reading habit; note taking; study habits; individual reading; upper basic education.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In every school setting, studying is one of the most important responsibilities students have. Maintaining good study habits will help them study their materials and succeed. Conversely, poor study habits will make it harder for learners to excel in their 44 course [1]. As we all know, students are perpetually in search of academic success, which is their ultimate goal. [2] Maintained that such Academic performance can be expressed in the form of good scores and prizes as a result of hard work and exceptional performance in classroom test, assignment and examination. Study habits are familiar concepts to most educators and learners. In schools, while most teachers are eager to identify good study habits, and to inculcate them in their students, good students on the other hand are anxious to acquire these habits in order to improve their academic performance, especially in English Language. Similarly, [3] asserted that study habits save time and effort. It is through the help of habits that we carry out daily routines. Therefore, good study habits are important ingredients in the life of a successful student in his courses of study since, it helps him to accomplish task effectively and efficiently. [4] Carried out a study on the relationship between study habits of secondary school students and their academic performance in Biology. The result revealed a significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of students. Furthermore, [5] have investigated the relationship between study habit and academic performance of students and arrived at the findings that study habits lead to improve academic achievement. The study indicated that effective study habit enable average students to perform better than an intelligent student with poor study habit.[6] conducted a study on group study and academic achievement and found that those who studied in group perform better in examination than those who studied individually.

[7] added that student should choose their suitable study habits from the various study habits because of individual differences, since according to the author, each student has his own goals in life and possess his unique ways of pursuing such goals.

It is observed that an effective study habit does not just occur, but acquired. As such, it has who have developed good 61 study habits do not just spend much time studying before they can attain success. Study habits, according to [8] have been defined as a particular pattern an individual develops for studying. In the same vein, [9] defined study habits as an approach a student adapts towards his study. This means that, a students' study habit could be group reading, individualize reading allocation of time, note taking, and assignment and so on. In this study, our emphasis is on group reading, individual reading and note taking.

Reading in a group as one of the study habits identified in this study can foster healthy personality adjustment since it provides a forum for group of individuals to selflessly share their experiences, problems and difficulties with others. [10] Stipulated that a student who knows how to study effectively in group will definitely perform higher than a brilliant student who does not know how to study effectively in a group. Group reading is a very powerful aspect of study habits because it is not restricted to place and time. In this study, the emphasis is on the relationship between study habit and academic performance of pupils in English Language. There are various aspects of English Language like phonology, lexis and structure, morphology etc. which should be properly taught by teachers of language in order to enhance their academic performance.

Each aspect is a function of the socio-cultural environment in which the language is spoken. In group reading, students from different socio-cultural background come together and share their ideas and experiences to the benefit of others. [11] Affirmed that group reading force students to alter their old ways of thinking and changes their less effective pattern of behavior and students are less likely to procrastinate. After all, it is easy to put off an assignment when you only have yourself to answer to. The author further maintained that group reading encourages students to explain things aloud. By speaking to and listening to others, students often improve on recall ability and ability to remember information on examination day. On the other hand, group reading is not without its problems. If students in a study group have poor notes and do not really understand the subject matter themselves, a bright student might spend all the time helping them and not receiving any help in return. Also, students in a study group may spend a certain amount of time chatting, joking and socializing. Another problem is that a large portion of time might be spent discussing some points that a student already understand.

Another variable of study habits identified for this study is individual reading habit. In this aspect, students can be expected to spend a large amount of time outside their timetable classes studying independently. During this time, a student may need to read in his subject area and organize his timetable to complete assignments as well as doing other course-related activities.

Note taking is also an important aspect of study habits. These notes are for student's personal use and should be helpful to them. Notes may not supply all the information in details, but will give students a picture in outline form. [12] Maintained that when taking notes, the following points should be kept in mind: use your words whenever possible, confirm your notes on a chapter to one side of the notebook sheet, if possible, look over your notes a day or so after taking them and make diagrams to clarify ideas whenever this seems necessary or appear to be helpful.

Note taking involves putting down in writing key points while lesson is going on. It is the conscientious effort of the learner to write down important points raised by the teacher during the lesson. [13] Said that note taking is a sophisticated skill which requires a special concentration to take in what is being said by the speaker, consider it in one's mind and write down the key points without losing track of the lesson. Also [14] added that taking notes in class helps prevent daydreaming because it gives the learner something to do besides listening passively to the teacher. Note taking has benefits for the learners. It helps learners to pay attention in class likewise their understanding of the lesson and improving their listening skill. It also, enables them to develop the skill of writing and helps them to learn how to spell words correctly. With these skills developed, learners who take notes in class can as well do better in their academic performance hence; they can recall words and write accurately.

Having highlighted some of the issues pertaining to study habits, it becomes imperative therefore to determine the relationship between upper basic pupils' study habits and their academic performance in English Language in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. From the available literature in the background, most researchers carried out research on study habits in higher institution and secondary school levels. But this present study seeks to examine the relationship between upper basic pupils study habits and their academic performance in English language. It is hoped that this study will fill the gap at that level.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The main essence of this study is to investigate the relationship of upper basic pupils' study habit and their academic performance in English Language in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. The study specially seeks to investigate if:

- i). Group reading has any relationship with pupil's academic performance in English Language.
- ii). Individual reading habit relates to pupils academic performance in English Language.
- iii). Note taking relates to pupils academic performance in English Language.

1.2 Hypotheses

In order to answer the research questions, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There is no significant relationship between group reading and pupils' academic performance in English Language.
2. There is no significant relationship between reading habit and pupils' academic performance in English Language.
3. There is no significant relationship between note taking and pupils' academic performance in English Language.

2. METHODS

The study was limited to Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. A total sample of 200 students was randomly selected from a population of 4,372 upper basic students. Five schools were involved in this exercise with 40 students selected from each of the five schools. The researchers employed both descriptive field study and participant observation research design. The former involved using a questionnaire and the latter was used to examine students' note books to see the quality and quantity of the notes they took during the English Language lessons/classes. Observation there from was used to design the final questionnaire used to collect the data. This data was collected using a questionnaire titled Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ) contained in Appendix A, and achievement test in English Language to measure pupils' performance as shown in Appendix B

The questionnaire and test items in English language (Appendix B) were developed by the researchers using a test blue-print. The items were face validated by experts in the area of test and measurement. The instruments were administered to 20 students who are not part of the study.

Thereafter, the reliability estimate was ascertained using the test-retest coefficient with result ranging from 0.86, for group study, 0.71 for individual study and 0.89 for note taking as well as 0.84 for the performance test in English Language. The result is presented in the table.

Test –retest reliability coefficient (N=20)

S/N	Variable	Item	Testing	\bar{x}	SD	rx _y
1	Group reading	5	1 st test	15.13	2.18	0.86
			2 nd test	14.11	2.99	
2	Individual reading	5	1 st test	15.26	2.24	0.71
			2 nd test	15.55	2.01	
3	Note taking	5	1 st test	15.06	1.64	0.89
			2 nd test	16.57	1.48	
4	Academic performance	5	1 st test	16.06	2.14	0.84
			2 nd test	17.18	1.99	

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The result and discussion of the analysis is present thus:

3.1 Hypothesis One

This hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between group reading and pupils' academic performance in English Language. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was in testing the hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between group reading and performance in English Language N=200

Variables	$\Sigma X \Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2 \Sigma Y^2$	ΣXY	r- Value
Group reading	3366	5979		
Performance in English Language	3468	6695	77975	0.38*

*Significant at .05 level, critical $r = .138$ $df = 198$

Following the result, the calculated r value of 0.38 is higher than the critical r – value of .138 at .05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected, implying that group study has a significant relationship with pupils' performance in English Language.

3.2 Hypothesis Two

This hypothesis stated that individual reading habit does not significantly relate to pupils' academic performance in English Language. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was used to analyze the data. Individual reading habit had a significant relationship with pupils' performance in English Language. This is because, the calculate r - value of 0.42 was higher than the critical r - value of 0.138 at 0.05 level of significance with degree of freedom 198. See Table 2

3.3 Hypothesis Three

This hypothesis stated that there is no significant relationship between note taking and pupils' academic performance in English Language. The statistical tool was Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The result is shown in Table 3.

Table 2. Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between individual reading and performance in English Language N=200

Variables	$\Sigma X \Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2 \Sigma Y^2$	ΣXY	r- Value
Individual Reading Habit	3342	5884		
Performance in English Language	3496	6695	79858	0.42*

*Significant at .05 level, critical $r = .138$ $df = 198$

Table 3. Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between note taking habit and performance in English Language N=200

Variables	$\Sigma X \Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2 \Sigma Y^2$	ΣXY	r- Value
Note taking Habit	3496	6538		
Performance in English Language	3468	6695	87985	0.51*

*Significant at .05 level, critical $r = .138$ $df = 198$

From the table, the result indicated a significant relationship between note taking and pupils' academic performance in English Language. The reason being that the calculated r- value of 0.51 is higher than the critical r- value of .138 at 0.05 level of significance with the degree of freedom of 198. This finding by implication means that note taking as an aspect of study habit is significantly related to pupils' academic performance in English Language. The hypothesis is therefore rejected, and the alternate hypothesis upheld.

4. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

The result of the first hypothesis indicated a significant relationship between group reading and pupils' academic performance in English Language. This result agrees with the findings of [15] who found out that when individuals in a group have important intellectual resources to share, it leads to co-operation and promotion of higher academic performance. The finding is also in line with [16] who maintained that a study group can be helpful when students are trying to learn information and concepts and preparing for class discussion tests. On the contrary, [17] working on the art and science of studying has shown that studying with a group of friends is not always an effective method of learning materials for an exam. While with friends, students may be more tempted to tell jokes than focus on their studies. However, if discipline is exercised, working closely with a small group of others can greatly advance students understanding of a topic and enhance academic performance in a class.

This implies that group study can be beneficial when the group is small but can become rowdy and less useful to the pupils if the group is large.

The second hypothesis revealed a significant relationship between individual reading habit and pupils' academic performance in English Language. This finding lend credence to [18] where ported that studying independently can make students spend a large amount of time concentrating thereby bringing about enhanced 209 understanding.

Individuals are apt to put more time on their own studying and are less distracted from group interaction that may occur during group discussions. The likely incidence of rowdiness from peers in a large group is completely absent. Individuals can also adequately plan their schedule of reading, trend of reading, choice of topics, among others.

Hypothesis three revealed a significant relationship between note taking and pupils' academic performance in English Language. This finding agrees with the views of [12] who maintained that taking down notes will prevent a student from carrying big text-books around. [11] Affirmed that information will not sink until and unless it is taken down in notes essentially, taking notes in class helps prevent daydreaming because it gives the learner something to do besides listening passively to the teacher which can bring about high academic performance [14].

The implication here is that note taking improves writing skill which results in improved performance in English language. Again in developing countries, students relied heavily on note taking since they have less access to textual materials. From most school practices, the notes usually form the bulk of test and examination questions. To this end, students who take note will likely perform better.

Generally speaking, note taking is a very vital component of teaching and learning with the teacher giving out salient points on a topic from which students can further develop. From the large arrays of materials available from the interface of classroom discussion and from information technology, group discussion can be very useful as supplementary information from that of the teacher. Essentially, individual reading can then integrate the teacher's and group discussion to accumulate and consolidate information that can enhance performance.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, it was concluded that students should employ different study habits like group reading, individual reading and note taking habit in order to enhance their performance. Students should also be allowed to spend quality time studying at home rather than engaging in domestic activities at home; and in school teachers should encourage students to learn in groups through debates, quiz and assignment as this will help to enhance their performance.

6. EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

Teachers should follow up and ensure that the entire pupils take down notes at all times and also ensure that the notes taken are appropriate in terms of sentence structure, spellings and grammar. Teachers should also make provision for slow writers, visually impaired pupils, absentees etc. For instance, bringing the visually impaired to the front seat and making sure the absentees copy their notes whenever they come back to school.

Educator should ensure that writing materials are adequately provided. For example, parents should ensure that their wards have all the necessary materials- note books, bios, pencils etc. Educator should make provision for space to enable pupils sit properly when taking note in the classroom. This is because in most schools, pupils sit on the floor to write or many pupils occupying very few desks making it difficult for them to write.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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APPENDIX A

Study Habit Questionnaire (SHQ)

Please kindly complete the table by ticking (√) the correct option that applies to you.
SA= strongly agreed, A= Agreed, D= disagreed, SD= strongly disagreed.

	SA	A	D	SD
Group reading				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
Individual reading				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
Note taking				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				

Choose the correct form of simile from the options A-D to fill the gaps in the following sentences

21. Paul is living – a king in America (A) like (B) for (C) to (D) from.
22. Mary is as wise – a serpent (A) to (B) is (C) as (D) at.

Read the passage below and then from the options A-D, choose the correct answer to fill the gap in the sentence.

Passage

Riding a bicycle is -23- interesting thing. You -24- to know how to -25- yourself on top of it without falling.

Options

23. (A) the (B) an (C) of (D) on.
24. (A) can (B) will (C) had (D) have.
25. (A) balance (B) stand (C) move (D) sat.

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