

***IMPACT OF NOTE TAKING AND STUDY HABIT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONG SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN IBADAN, OYO STATE, NIGERIA***

***BY***

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of note taking and study habit on academic performance among selected secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Descriptive research design was used in the study. Nine hundred respondents were selected from three selected Local Government in Oyo State, Nigeria. The respondents were measured with relevant adapted standardized scale (instruments) which include note taking scale, study habit scale and students' academic performance scale and the data obtained was analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple regression statistical analysis of the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). Three research Questions were raised and answered in the study. The result showed that students' academic performance is significantly correlated with: (1) Note taking ( $r = .825$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and (2) Study habit ( $r = .819$ ;  $p < .05$ ), the independent variables (note taking and study habit) when pulled together have significant effects on the students' academic performance ( $R$  (adjusted) = .969 and  $R^2$  (adjusted) = .938) and each of the independent variables made a significant contribution to the prediction of students' academic performance. In term of magnitude of contribution, note taking made the most significant contribution (Beta = .467;  $t = 18.662$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) to the prediction follow by study habit (Beta = .370;  $t = 10.423$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). In view of these findings, the study stressed and advocated the need for the school counselors need to enlighten the students on how to improve their level of note taking and study habits.*

**Key words:** *Study Habit, Note Taking and Students' Academic Performance*

### Background to the study

The issue of poor academic performance of students in Nigeria has been of much concern to all and sundry. The problem is so much that it has led to the widely acclaimed fallen standard of education in Nigeria at large. Aremu (2001) stresses that learning outcome has become a subject matter of importance to stakeholders (educational psychologists, teachers, academics, school administrators and managers, policy makers and planners, counsellors, psychometricians, parents e.t.c) in education and to a large extent to students who are the direct beneficiaries or victims of the outcome. Academic achievement is undoubtedly a research after the heart of educational psychologists. In their attempt to investigate what determines academic outcomes of learners, they have come with more questions than answers. In recent time, prior literature has shown that learning outcomes (academic achievement and academic performance) have been determined by such variables as; family, school, society, and motivation factors (e.g Aremu and Sokan, 2003; Aremu and Oluwole, 2001; Muraina, 2013).

In the same vein, Parker, Creque, Harris, Majeski, Wool, and Hogan (2003) noted that much of the previous studies have focused on the impact of demographic and socio-psychological variables on academic achievement. More recently, another emerging dimension to the determinant of academic achievement is government factor (e.g., Aremu & Sokan, 2003; Aremu, 2004; Muraina, Muraina, Amao & Oyelade, 2013). In spite of the seeming exhaustiveness of literature on the determinants of academic achievement of learners, there seems to be more area of interest to be investigated. This becomes obvious in view of the continue interest of researchers and Educational psychologists; and the continued attention of government and policy makers and planners. Academic performance (most especially of secondary school students) has been largely associated with many factors. Most students in secondary schools in Nigeria are daily confronted with challenges of coping with their academics due to ineffective note taking skills and unsuitable study habit among others.

When the issue of Nigeria educational system today is raised, the first sets of thoughts that comes to mind are: decline in standard, deterioration of facilities, examination malpractices, mass promotion syndrome and the like before any other thing else. This calls for an in-depth study and analysis aimed at tutoring each and every stakeholders in the education system on how their actions and inactions have individually and collectively contributed to the collapsing state of education in Nigeria (Muraina, Muraina, Amao & Oyelade, 2013; Muraina, 2012; Amao, Muraina, Olashinde-Giwa & Muraina, 2013) In any case, knowledge and skill acquisition which education is all about cannot be over emphasized. The World Bank (2009) stated that successful development entails more than investing in physical capital, or closing the gap in capital. It also entails acquiring and using knowledge as well as closing the gaps in knowledge.

Over time students' academic performance in both internal and external examinations had been used to determine excellence in teachers and teaching (Ajao 2001). Considering the governments' huge investment in public education, its output in terms of quality of students has been observed to be unequal with government expenditure. Consequent upon the observed deterioration in the academic achievement, attitude and values of secondary school students in public secondary schools one wonders if the high failure rates and the poor quality of the students is not a reflection of the instructional quality in the schools.

Note taking has been a staple activity of academic life, particularly in lecture courses, for decades. Despite its widespread use, note taking has generally been taken for granted by both instructors and students. However, in the past few years, changes in the landscape of higher education, such as the proliferation of commercial note taking services, have led instructors to ask questions about the efficacy of note taking in promoting learning and their own role in the process (Muraina, Muraina, Amao & Oyelade, 2013; Muraina, 2013). These questions reflect instructor concerns not only about note taking services, but also the apparent decrease in student note taking abilities and the introduction of active modes of learning within lectures.

Research on note taking indicates that taking notes in class and reviewing those notes (either in class or afterward) have a positive impact on student learning. Not surprisingly, the preponderance of studies confirms that students recall more lecture material if they record it in their notes (Bligh, 2000). Students who take notes score higher on both immediate and delayed tests of recall and synthesis than students who do not take notes (Kiewra, Benton, and Lewis, 2007). Moreover, the more students record, the more they remember and the better they perform on examinations (Johnstone & Su, 2004). In summary, note taking facilitates both recall of factual material and the synthesis and application of new knowledge, particularly when notes are reviewed prior to examinations. Many studies of note taking find that review of notes (one's own, borrowed notes, or notes provided by the instructor) significantly improve recall of lecture material. Kiewra, Benton, Kim, Risch, and Christensen (2007) found that students who take notes but do not review, earn lower examination scores than students who review notes prior to the examination.

Additionally, students not present at the lecture but given notes to review (either the instructors' notes or notes taken by other students) did almost as well as the students who reviewed their own notes and significantly better than students who did not review. Given the importance of note taking and review to student learning, it is especially problematic that student notes are often incomplete and/or inadequate. Research indicates that students fail to record 40% of the important in summary; note taking facilitates both recall of factual material and the synthesis and application of new knowledge, particularly when notes are reviewed prior to examinations (Muraina, Muraina, Amao & Oyelade, 2013; Muraina, 2012; Amao, Muraina, Olashinde-Giwa & Muraina, 2013; Howe, 2000; Locke, 2007). Material written on the blackboard makes it into students' notes at a higher rate than material

communicated verbally. Students record most of the blackboard information (Locke, 2007), but only about 10% of information delivered orally (Johnstone & Su, 2004). However, students are selective about which lecture material to record, so that while overall recording may be low, recording of main ideas may be quite high.

Adeyemo (2005) opined that study habit was a pattern of activity that went beyond merely reading for pleasure. It is a well planned and deliberate form of consistency on the part of the student towards the understanding academic subjects. Bakare (1977) in his study habit inventory pointed out eight key sources of poor academic achievement. Study habit problems associated with student's response to home work and assignments; reading and note taking and study period procedure; student's concentration; towards examination and teachers' consultation. The inability to utilize effectively and positively these sources of study problems may stand in the way of effective study and good performance among the students. The practice, in most senior secondary schools in Nigeria, allows the students to perform experiment in a cook-book fashion whereby students only follow direct instructions. By this practice, the students get the impression that only the final results and calculations based on them matter (Alam, 2009). Encouragements were not given by the teachers to the students to ask 'why' during the experiment. These could be ascribed to low abilities and poor academic standard of students as problems that necessitated this research (Alam, 2009).

Study habits may be taken for granted, particularly in developing countries. In Africa, there is widespread reading in all scholarly fields, but less is being achieved in writing and publication. Efficient study habits can strengthen writing. Professors in the developing countries, such as those in Nigerian universities, should attempt to equip graduates with high level of analytical skills, the capacity for critical reasoning, self-reflection and conceptual grasp and ability to learn autonomously and exercise flexibility of mind (Simmons 2003). Study habits are actually improving because of the advent and wide use of the Internet, hypertext, and multimedia resources (Liu, 2005). Karim and Hassan (2006) also note the exponential growth digital information, which changes the way students perceive study and in how printed materials are used to facilitate study. Liu (2005) and Ramirez (2003) report that students print material from the Internet in order to study and read later on. Igun (2005) also found that Nigerians study from materials downloaded from the Internet.

Individual's studying pattern affect the amount of information which such individual add into his long term memory. Study habit refer to whether students read at the same time each day, whether they shut off radio, television while reading and whether they paraphrase and write down what they have read during the practical instructions. Study habit also describes some external activities which serve to activate and facilitate the internal process of learning as defined by Rothkopf (2002). Many studies have been carried out which make available today an important catalogue on Study habit (Ogunmakin, 2001; Kumar, 2002; Gbore, 2006). They argued that Study habit have strong relationship with academic performance of students while other researchers (Owolabi, 2006; Muraina, Muraina, Amao & Oyelade, 2013; Muraina, 2013; Amao, Muraina, Olashinde-Giwa & Muraina, 2013) concluded that it was the combination of the Study habit and other factors that could explain students' academic performance in any course of study.

As such, in order to fill the gaps in the above studies reviewed, the present study intends to find out the impact of note taking and study habit on academic performance among selected secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the problem**

Due to the increasing nature of poor academic performance of secondary school students especially in external examinations like West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) or Universal

Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), many educationists tend to shift the blame on the teaching methodology adopted by the teachers and lack of fund from the government to provide quality textbooks. However, these might not be the main reasons why students perform poorly in examinations. It is clear from all indications that most secondary school students have poor study habit which might lead to poor academic performance. As true as this might sound, it is yet to gather adequate research evidence to prove that it is a key factor on why students fail. This is because of the public outcries concerning the low standard of education in the country (Imoge 2002). The declining quality of education in the country and the breeding of graduates with little technical know-how have resulted in serious setbacks to the industrial development of the nation. However, West Africa examination council has revealed in their annual report, the more failure of senior school students in the certificate examination (SSCE). As such, some factors are possibly responsible for poor academic performance such as note taking and reading skills among others. In view of this, the present study focus on the impact of note taking and study habit on academic performance among selected secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the relationship among the two independent variables (note taking and study habit) and dependent variables (secondary school students' academic performance)
2. What is the combined effect of two independent variables (note taking and study habit) on dependent variables (secondary school students' academic performance)
3. What is the relative effect of each of the two independent variables (note taking and study habit) on dependent variables (secondary school students' academic performance)

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The research design used in this study was descriptive study. It is going to ascertain the effects of the independent variables (note taking and study habit) on the dependent variable (students' academic performance) without manipulations. However, it is carefully observed and recorded information as it naturally occurred at the time the study was conducted.

### **Population**

The population for the study comprises of all secondary school students in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample for this study comprises 900 participants which were randomly selected from secondary school students in selected three Local Governments in Ibadan, Nigeria. Fifteen (15) secondary school students were selected from twenty (20) selected schools in the each Local Government through stratified random techniques balloting. On the whole, nine hundred secondary school students were selected for this study.

### **Research Instruments**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the following scales:

#### **Study Habit Scale**

The Study Habit scale developed by Animasaun (2007) was adopted to be used as a measure of reading skills questionnaire. It is a twenty items scale with responses anchored base on the four likert points. Some of the items of the scale read as follow: 1 I attend my classes regularly. 2. I am restless and I cannot pay much attention in the class. 3. I copy class notes from my friends. 4. I hate some of my teachers and cannot discuss anything with them. As indicated by Animasaun the instrument has a Cronbach's Alpha of .90 and .83 internal consistency was obtained.

### Note taking scale

The note taking scales constructed by Patricia (2007) was adopted to be used as a measure of note taking Questionnaire. it is a fifteen items scale with responses anchored base on the four likert points. Some of the items of the scale read as follow: (1) Do you tend to write down things which later turn out to be unimportant? (2) Do you miss important points in the lecture while copying down notes on something which has gone before? (3) Do you keep all your notes for each subject together and carefully arranged for studying? The scale had high internal consistency of .75 with cronbach's alpha .80.

### Academic Performance scale

The students' Academic Achievement Results in third term Examination 2012/2013 both in English and Mathematics was used as measure of academic achievement scale. The scale was however subjected to validation to ensure efficient value of difficulty and discrimination figures.

### Validity of Instrument

The researcher gave the instruments to experts in the field of educational psychology and experts in the area of research and statistics. After all these people had given their suggestions and made necessary corrections on the instrument.

### Reliability of Instrument

After content and face validity of the instruments, thirty (30) copies of the instruments were administered in order to test them for reliability. The cronbach alpha technique was then be used to test their reliability to ensure that they are consistent in measuring what they were designed to measure. The reliability coefficient of .72 was obtained.

### Administration of Instrument

The instruments were administered to the subjects on the day approved by the school authorities for the exercise. The researcher was assisted by the teachers in administration and collection of the instruments. On the whole data collection lasted for one week. Out of the Questionnaires distributed only those that were properly filled in were considered useful for research purpose.

### Method of Data Analysis

## RESULTS

**Research Question One:** What is the relationship among the two independent variables (note taking and study habit) and the dependent variables (secondary school students' academic performance)?

**Table1: Descriptive statistics and Inter-correlations among the variables**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Academic Performance	Note Taking	Study Habit
Academic Performance	900	43.24	23.69	1.00		
Note Taking	900	40.91	17.96	.825	1.00	
Study Habit	900	54.08	23.67	.819	.476	1.00

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).*

Table 1 contains descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among the study variables. As shown in the table 1, students' academic performance is significantly correlated with: (1) Note taking ( $r = .825$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and (2) Study habit ( $r = .819$ ;  $p < .05$ ). There were also significant correlations among the two independent variables.

**Research Question Two:** What is the combined effect of the two independent variables (note taking and study habit) on the dependent variables (secondary school students' academic performance)?

**Table 2: Multiple regression analysis on students' academic performance data**

Multiple R(adjusted)=.969				
Multiple R <sup>2</sup> (adjusted)=.938				
Standard error of estimate=5.879				
Analysis of variance				
	Sum of square (SS)	DF	Mean square	F
Regression	99636.87	2	24909.22	720.77
Residual	6393.48	887	34.56	
Total	106030.34	889		

The table above shows that the independent variables (note taking and study habit) when pulled together have significant effects on the students' academic performance. The value of R (adjusted) =.969 and R<sup>2</sup> (adjusted) =.938. The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F- ratio value of 720.77 and was found to be significant at 0.05 level.

**Research Question Three:** What is the relative effect of each of the two independent variables (note taking and study habit) on the dependent variables (secondary school students' academic performance)?

**Table 3: Relative contribution of independent variables to the prediction**

	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients		T	P
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Model					
Constant	20.246	1.363		14.851	P<0.05
Note Taking	.615	.033	.467	18.662	P<0.05
Study Habit	.370	.036	.370	10.423	P<0.05

The table above shows that each of the independent variables made a significant contribution to the prediction of students' academic performance. In term of magnitude of contribution, note taking made the most significant contribution (Beta= .467; t= 18.662; P<0.05 to the prediction follow by study habit (Beta= .370; t= 10.423; P<0.05).

### Discussion of Findings

The result of the first research question revealed that there was significant relationship among the two independent variables (note taking and study habit) and the dependent variables (secondary school students' academic performance). This finding is consistent with evidence of Kiewra (2009), note taking is beneficial for at least two reasons. First, note taking aids lecture learning by activating attentional mechanisms and engaging the learner's cognitive processes of coding, integrating, synthesizing, and transforming aurally received input into a personally meaningful form. Second, note taking is seen as beneficial because the notes taken serve as an external repository of information that permits later revision and review to stimulate recall of the information heard. Students who use proper reading skills containing note taking and studying that notes, can preserve knowledge for longer time (Eliot et al., 2002). A few researchers have looked at cultural aspects of lecture listening from an ethnographic perspective, noting that note taking is only one of many

strategies used for lecture comprehension and may not be an important strategy in many contexts (e.g, Benson, 2004; Flowerdew & Miller, 2005). In one of the first investigations of the relationship between learners' note taking and listening comprehension, Chaudron, Cook, and Loschky (2008) investigated the effect on comprehension tests of the availability of notes taken during lecture listening.

Certainly and in consonant with the present finding, it can be ascertained that note taking determines to great extent students' academic performance. In line with this, Bohlender et al (2001) Michaels and Miethe (2009) found a small relationship between study skills and students' academic performance. Research on the correlation between study habit and students academic achievement has for long received attention from scholars and educational agencies. For instance, the national Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in 1994 conducted a study to find out the relationship between study habits and academic performance of the students. Findings of the study revealed a positive correlation between study habit and academic achievement. Similarly, Onwuegbuzie (2001) conducted a series of studied to find out the relationship between academic success and study habit and reported positive relationship between the two variables. However, studies of school achievement indicate that most students are under achievers (Dizney, 2003; Okegbile, 2007; Adetunji and Oladeji, 2007).

The result of the second research question revealed that the two independent variables (note taking and study habit) have combined effect on the dependent variables (secondary school students' academic performance). The magnitude of the prediction of the two independent variables was reflected in value of  $R$  (adjusted) =.969 and  $R^2$  (adjusted) =.938. The result thus demonstrated that 93.8% of the variance in the students' academic performance is accounted for by the linear combination of the three independent variables. The result was further strengthened by the value of  $F$ -ratio ( $F=720.77$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). What the results are saying is that the capacity of the two independent variables to predict students' academic performance could not have happened by chance. This finding is in consonance with the work of many researchers Oguz (2009), found a significant difference between the students who received note-taking training, taking notes at lessons and reviewing the notes and students who attending lessons without receiving note-taking training. Studies point out that effective note-taking increases students' success at lessons (Austin, Lee & Carr, 2003; Bretzing et al., 2007). However, many of the students prefer to take the notes of their friends (Wolff, 2001). Researchers studying nonnative-English speakers have also examined whether or not taking notes facilitates lecture learning and what kind of notes listeners take when listening to mini lectures (Bilbow, 2009; Carrell, Dunkel, & Mollaun, 2002, 2004; Chaudron, Cook, & Loschky, 2008; Chaudron, Loschky, & Cook, 2004; Clerehan, 2005; Cushing, 2001; Dunkel, 2008; Dunkel & Davy, 2009; Hale & Courtney, 1994; Liu, 2001; Faraco, Barbier, & Piolat, 2002).

The result of the third research question revealed that each of the two independent variables (note taking and study habit) has a relative effect on the dependent variables (secondary school students' academic performance). That is study habit and note taking predicts the students' academic performance. In term of magnitude of contribution, note taking made the most significant contribution ( $Beta= .467$ ;  $t= 18.662$ ;  $P<0.05$  to the prediction follow by study habit ( $Beta= .370$ ;  $t= 10.423$ ;  $P<0.05$ ). This findings means that study habit and note taking relative determines the students' academic performance. This finding is in consonance with the work of previous researchers. A number of researchers, focusing principally on native English-speaking of students, have investigated the issue of lectures and student learning (Armel & Shrock, 2006; Barnett, DiVesta, & Rogozinski, 2001; Cohn, Cohn, & Bradley, 2005; Fisher & Harris, 2003; Kiewra, 2003, 2007, 2009; Kiewra, Benton, Kim, Risch, & Christensen, 2005; Kiewra, DuBois, Christensen, Kim, & Lindberg, 2009; Kiewra, Mayer, Christensen, Kim, & Risch, 2001).

## Conclusion and recommendations

Base on the findings of this study, persistent poor performance of Nigerian secondary school students due to the bad students' academic performance should not continue indefinitely. There is hope that with the improvement of students' study habit and note taking, the situation can be changed for the better. The study discovered that teachers' study habit and note taking influence significantly the students' academic performance in the school. As such, it is very crucial to improve these factors so as to eradicate the persistent occurrence of poor report of students' academic performance in this country, Nigeria. By and large, it was also concluded from this study that study habit and note taking have great impact on the students' academic performance. This means that students' study habit and note taking will definitely have a negative effect on their productivity. By implication, students' academic performance can be improved through effective study habit and note taking in the school system. It was also discovered from the findings that study habit and note taking affect the students' academic performance. Therefore, these components are to be improved in students for them to have improved academic achievement not only in Oyo State but also in other States of Nigeria. It is recommended that parents and teachers should encourage the students to inculcate positive attitudes towards study habit. Also, the school counselors, educational manager, school administrators and policy makers need to enlighten the students on how to improve their level of note taking and study habits in and outside the school.

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