Demographic Variables and Students' Study Habits in Physics in Secondary Schools in Nsit Atai Local Government Area

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Abstract

This study on Demographic Variables and Students' Study Habits in Physics was informed by the poor performance of students in the subject and poor study habit by the students. It investigated the influence of Mother's Level of Education, Father's Occupation and Gender on the study habits of Physics students. Three null hypotheses were formulated and tested. The design adopted was descriptive survey. The sample consisted of 150 SS2 students offering Physics randomly drawn from three public schools in Nsit Atai Local Government Area. The instrument used for collecting relevant data was Demographic Variables and Study habits questionnaire (DVSHQ) with reliability coefficient of 0.78. The findings from the result of data analysis using chi square showed that the three Demographic Variables investigated do not exert significant influence on the study habits of students offering Physics. It was recommended among others, that students should be given guidance and counselling services with regard to study habits so that they may identify their weaknesses and strengths in the learning strategies.

Keywords: Demographic Variables, Study Habits, Mother's Educational level, Father's Occupation, Gender

Introduction

Learning is the goal of education. It is also a widely acknowledge fact that an inextricable relationship exists between studying, learning and academic performance. Equally too, through rather regrettable it is also commonly observed that a majority of students studying in secondary schools and tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria are faced with several difficulties in their efforts to attain certain acceptable levels of proficiency in their studying, learning and academic performance. These problems include among others poor reading habits, poor note taking habits, poor use of library, poor time management habits, poor concentration habits, unpreparedness towards tests and examinations just to mention but a few. Above all, there seems to be alarming rate of examination malpractices in our institutions of learning of all levels. All these are indicators that our students on the average may not be studying well and enough in schools.

Uwah (2013) observed that the most serious problem faced by students in Colleges which in turn leads to the several setbacks to study efficiency and their inability to make use of time available to them for studying in the most productive manner. The source maintained that the students in Colleges spend most of their time at social networking sites on un-educational activity such as useless chatting with friends, downloading and uploading of members' profile pictures, music, games and videos. They pay little or no attention to educational activities. This scenario is not peculiar to College Students alone. It is very common among secondary schools Students as well. This situation becomes even of greater concern when one considers the fact that there are already some legitimate extra-curricular activities such as games, compound cleaning, farm work, club meetings, Church Fellowship among others which Students are required to participate in for their all round physical, social, academic and spiritual development.

Most students who experience difficulties in reading comprehension of prescribed texts, read without having a preset plan such as the survey question-read-recite and review (SQ3R) technique (Bairer, 2011). Nothana and Venage (2009) earlier discovered that many students lack note-taking skills while listening to classroom lecturers. Such learning difficulties may arise as a result of the student's inability to capture key information in the lecturers delivered. It has also been observed that a majority of students who find it difficult to concentrate while studying, lack self-discipline, intrinsic motivational goal, orientation study habit (Cellar, 2011).

Physics-the study of matter, energy and their interactions is an exciting intellectual adventure that inspires young people and expands the frontiers of our knowledge about nature. We understand science in terms of the concepts developed in Physics. Not only this, many of the tools on which the advances of science and technology depend are direct product of Physics. In medicine, we use X-rays, radioisotope and nuclear magnetic resonance imaging. In addition, laser, electron microscopes, synchrotron radiation, and electronics all depend on advances made in Physics. Our modern world is much more connected than in previous historical time. These days we travel far, communicate easily and quickly, and conduct business around the world effortlessly courtesy Physics made easy.

Omosewo (2012) defined physics as the branch of science that deals with energy and matter, and their interactions. It is sometimes referred to as the science of measurement and its knowledge has contributed greatly to the production of the human race. The importance of Physics cannot be over stressed as it forms the basis for technological advancement of any nation. Its study can lead to several scientific fields and professions such as engineering, mining, manufacturing and construction industries. Within the context of science education, Physics has been identified as a very important school subject and its significance in scientific and technological development of any nation has been widely reported.

According to Enang (2009), learning may be greatly gratifying but studying usually involves hard-work while academic performance is usually the product of studying and learning. The source went on to say that, to study effectively more often than not, requires the students to set up an organized programme that will lead to the acquisition and effective utilization of suitable requisite study habits that will give and facilitates the students study efforts in this direction.

Although, it is of common knowledge that no two people study the same way and there is no one best study habit for every learner, subject matter and learning situation, there are some proven study habits that generally seem to produce good results. Such study habits include among others time-control/allocation, goal-directed, visual-imaging, note-taking and the survey-question-read-

recite-review (SQ3R) study habits. The question that therefore begs itself is whether there is any clear correlation between study habits and students type.

It is well known that different students depending on their circumstances acquire and effectively utilize different study habits, skills techniques, strategies and tips. These include regular class attendance, library skills, laboratory skills, assignment writing skills, examination skills and techniques, time and distraction management skills, note –taking skills while listening to lecturers, choosing where to study that is most suitable, self-motivation, supervision, discipline skills, just to mention but a few. It is also well known that students perform differently when put under examination considerations. It is therefore against this background that this present study was deemed, necessary to investigate the relationship between students study habits and students type with particular reference to Physics Students in Secondary Schools in Nsit Atai Local Government Area.

Statement of the Problem

Mastering the art of effectively studying a subject like Physics in Secondary School is definitely a difficult task. As a matter of fact, it requires from the students a lot of self motivation guidance, discipline and supervision. Enriquez (2010) and Uwah (2013) all observed that a majority of students waste away most of their valuable time on un-academic matters. Some apply poor and ineffective study skills for learning (Kizlik, 2014). The common problem faced by these secondary school students is how to adapt to new ways of studying such as note-taking while listening to teachers,, assignment writing skills, library skills among others. The Secondary School system and the other hand does not put in place programme which could improve on the study habits of the students as they pass from the primary to the secondary school level of education. The main problem for the study is what are the different study habits used by different categories of students in studying Physics in Secondary Schools in the study area? The elements of the problem are these among the following: note-taking, time management, survey-question-read-recite and review (SQ3R) and goal directed study habits, which one of them do students of educated parents; children of parents who work in government; male and female students; students of different age levels use in studying Physics in secondary schools in Nsit Atai Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State? This is the problem that this study sought to address.

Purpose of the Study

This study is designed to investigate into study habits in Physics of different categories of students in Secondary Schools in Nsit Atai Local Government Area. Specifically, the study sought:

1. To ascertain the influence of mothers' educational level on the study habits of students offering Physics
2. To assess the influence of fathers' occupation on the study habits of students offering Physics
3. To examine the influence of gender on the study habits of students offering Physics.

Research Question

The following research questions were asked to guide the study:

1. How does the level of education of mothers influence the study habits of their wards offering Physics?

2. To what extent does father's occupation influence, study habits of their wards offering Physics?
3. To what extent do male and female students differ in their study habits in Physics?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

1. There is no significant influence of mother's education on their wards study habit in Physics.
2. There is no significant influence of father's occupation on their wards study habit in Physics.
3. There is no significant influence of gender on the study habit of students in Physics.

Review of Related Literature

Mother's Educational Level and Study Habits of Students

The research on the effects of mother's education on the child indicates mixed results. Raize, Keran and Malik (2002) found out that there existed a significant and positive relationship between achievement of the students and the said factors like schedule of study, habit of note-taking and writing books. Significant differences were obtained in the academic achievement of students due to low, high level of goal orientation, study skills, scholarly study skills and over all study efficiency (Gakhar, 2005). Abid (2006) revealled that guidance services have significant effect on the students study attitudes, study habits and academic achievement. Franklin (2006) conducted a study to describe the study habits of undergraduate's students who were enrolled in the initial phase of a teacher education programme at a large urban University. The findings of the study indicated that a significant number of students study at home, cram the night before an examination, depends on other classmates to answer their questions, and feel that they spend an adequate amount of time preparing for academic classes. Lakshnimarayanan, Suresh and Kumari (2006) have made attempt to compare achievers and non-achievers in study skills. Result in general indicates that achievers use higher level of study skills than non-achievers. Sud and Sujata (2006) reported that girls have better study habits than boys.

According to Ghosh (2017) the first name which comes from baby's mouth is 'ma'. The mother is the first teacher of a child. Mother is the person who takes care of child's nutrition, hygiene, education than anyone else in the family. The education of women is not imperative for the benefit for the women only but for uplifting of the society also. Every member of the family occupies a vital position in the interactive map of the child but among them the role of mother is important and varied. Mother plays important role in the personality development of the children by shaping their intellectual and social behaviours.

Father's Occupation and Students' Study Habits

The review of fast studies revealed that parental occupation affects the study habits of children. Muni (2014) observed that father's and mother's occupation has significant influence on the study habits of form VI pupils. Thakur and Nisha (2007) found that study habits of the students do not differ significantly at different types of their father's occupation. Krishnaiah (2010) also reported significant influence of father's and mother's occupation on study habits among intermediate students. Attri (2013) revealed that there were insignificant differences between rural Senior Secondary Students of working and non-working mothers on measure of overall,

comprehension, concentration, task orientation, sets interaction, drilling, supports, recording and Language capacity components of study habits.

Gender and Age Differences in Study Habits

Salami (2013) who studied the impact of biological gender on study habits; found that females are generally shown to be more ethical such as frequency of attending lecturers and seeking academic assistance, missing class, tests and assignments, duration of study, adherence to timetable and note-taking and as such try to avoid negative consequences of behaviours such as cheating. Although trends in international mathematics and science study cited in Amatobi and Amatobi (2013) found no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls in Mathematics achievement, they however observed differences between boys and girls in terms of their attitudes to the subject. Awabil, Kolo, Bello and Oliagbo (2013) reported that gender was not a significant determinant of study habits. Gender plays an important role in human development and behaviors, just as effective study habits/skills promote academic progress. One can also say that the way a human being views himself/herself has significant in developing effective study skills. Every student has his/her own way of studying. Some students prefer to study in a quiet atmosphere alone without any interference, while others prefer studying with peers, discussing and reviewing ideas together. This therefore shows that learning is a matter of personal habits (Charles-ogan and Alamina, 2014).

METHOD

Research Design

The study was a descriptive survey. This design was deemed appropriate since the information needed is already on ground and cannot be manipulated.

Population of the Study

The study population comprised all 1,500 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) Physics students in all the six (6) public secondary schools in Nsit Atai Local Government Area. (Statistics Unit, LEC Nsit Atai, 2016).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The study sample comprised 150 Physics students drawn from the study population. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 10 percent of students from three schools which were selected randomly from the six (6) Public Schools using simple random sampling technique of balloting. In each of the three schools all the SS2 Physics students in their intact class setting formed the sample for the study.

Research Instrument

The instrument for data collection was tagged, "Demographic Variables and Study Habit Questionnaire (DVSHQ)", which was developed by the researcher and used for the study. The STSHQ consisted of two parts. Part one sought information on the students' types such as mother's education, father's occupation and gender of the students. The items in part one ranged from 1 to 3. Respondents were required to tick (√) the items that applied to them. Part two sought information on study habits and ranged from section A to D. Section A sought information on note taking, B sought information on time management, C sought information on survey-question-read-recite-review technique; and section D sought information on goal directed study habit. Each of these four sections had 5 items making a total of 20 items all measured in a four-

point rating scale of strongly agree to strongly
disagree. The respondents were required to tick only their option levels of agreement to the items.

Reliability of the research Instrument

In order to ascertain whether the instrument was measuring consistently what it was meant to measure, it was subjected to pre-testing on 50 students in a school not selected for the study within the study area. The scores of odd number items in the STSHQ were collected separately from the scores of even number items for each of the 50 students who took part in the pre-test. Then the Pearson product moment correlation (PPMC) analysis was used to compute the r-value. The reliability index of 0.78 was obtained from the analysis and was considered by the experts as high enough in accordance with (Onwiodukit, 2000) who noted that a coefficient of 0.5 would suffice in early stage of research study.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The null hypotheses were analyzed using chi square and percentage counts in analysing the research questions. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: A 4x4 Contingency Table linking Mother's Educational level and Students Study Habits

Level of Education	f	N.T	T.M	SQ3R	G.D	Total
Non Education	fo	3(33.33%)	3(33.33%)	2 (22.22%)	1 (11.11%)	9
	fe	2.25	2.25	2.16	1.80	
Low Education	fo	8 (32%)	6 (24%)	8 (32%)	3 (12%)	25
	fe	7.00	7.00	6.00	5.00	
Medium Education	fo	19 (30%)	18 (29%)	16 (25%)	10 (16%)	63
	fe	17.64	17.64	15.12	12.60	
High Education	fo	12 (23%)	15 (28%)	10 (19%)	16 (30%)	53
	fe	14.84	14.84	12.72	10.60	
Total		42 (28%)	42(28%)	36 (24%)	30 (20%)	150

Calculated $x^2 = \sum \frac{(fo - fe)2}{fe}$ = 6.88

Critical x^2= 16.92
df = 9

To answer question one the results on Table 1 reveal that out of 150 students used in the study, 9 of them their mother's do not have any educational qualification; 25 of them said their mothers had low education; 63 said their mothers had medium education while 53 students said their mother had first degree and above. Also of the 150 students, 42 (28%) adopted and are good in note taking and time management study habits each. 36 (24%) adopted SQ3R study habit and are good in it while 30 (20%) adopted goal directed study habit. This result shows that there is difference in the study habits of students used in this study with regards to their mother's level of education.

However, the results on Table 1 also indicate that the calculated x^2 (6.88) is less than critical x^2 (16.92) at 0.05 probability level and a degree of freedom of 9. This implies that mother's educational level do not significantly influence students study habits in Physics. Hence, null hypothesis one Ho_1 is upheld.

Table 2: A 4x4 Contingency Table showing Father's Occupation and Students' Study Habits

Occupation	f	N.T	T.M	SQ3R	G.D	Total
Non Gvt. Workers	fo	10 (27.0033)	9 (24.32%)	6 (16.22%)	12 (32.43%)	37
	fe	10.85	9.13	8.14	8.88	
Daily Paid	fo	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	10
	fe	2.93	2.47	2.20	2.40	
Civil Servants	fo	18 (29%)	14 (23%)	17 (27%)	13 (21%)	62
	fe	18.19	15.29	13.64	14.88	
Political appointees	fo	12 (29%)	11 (27%)	8 (18%)	10 (24%)	41
	fe	12.03	10.11	9.02	9.84	
Total		44 (29%)	37 (25%)	33 (22%)	36 (24%)	150

Calculated $x^2 = \sum \frac{(fo-fe)2}{fe}$ = 4.41

Critical x^2= 16.92

df = 9

To answer question 2, results on Table 2 reveal that of 150 students used in this study 37 of them indicated that their fathers are not working in government; 10 students said their fathers are daily paid; 62 of them agreed that their fathers are civil servant while 41 said that their father's are political appointees.

Considering study habits, 44 (29%) out of 150 adopted and are good in note taking study habit. 37 (25%) are good in time management study habit. 33 (22%) adopted SQ3R study habit and are good in it while 36 (24%) used goal directed study habit and use it often. These results show that students study habits differ greatly with their father's occupation in Physics.

However, as shown on Table 2, the calculated x^2 (4.41) is less than the critical x^2 (16.92) at 0.05 probability level and a degree of freedom of 9. This shows that father's occupation does not significantly influence study habits of Physics students used in this study. Hence, Ho_2 is upheld.

Table III: A 2x4 Contingency Table showing Students Gender and Study Habits

Gender	f	N.T	T.M	SQ3R	G.D	Total
Male	fo	21 (25.93%)	15 (18.52%)	25 (30.86%)	20 (24.69%)	81
	fe	19.98	20.52	23.76	16.74	
Female	fo	16 (23%)	23 (33%)	19 (28%)	11 (16%)	69
	fe	17.02	17.48	20.24	14.26	
total	fe	37	38	44	31	150

Calculated $x^2 = \sum \frac{(fo-fe)}{fe}$ 2 = 4.87

Critical x^2 = 7.82
df = 3

To answer research question 3, the results on table 3 reveal that 81 out of 150 students used in the study were males while 69 were females. 21 (25.93%) of males were good in note taking study habit against 23% of the females. 15 (18.52%) males were good in time management study habit against 23 (33%) of females. In SQ3R, 25 (30.86%) of the males were good against 19 (28%) of the females while 20 (24.69%) the males were good in goal directed study habit against 11 (16%) of the females. However, results on Table 3 indicate that the calculated x^2 (4.87) is less than the critical x^2 (7.82) at 0.05 probability level and a degree of freedom of 3. This result shows no significant influence of gender on the study habits of boys and girls used in this study. Hence, null hypothesis 3 is upheld.

Discussion

Mother's Educational Level and Study Habits

The observation made with respect to the influence of mother's educational level indicated no significant influence on study habits of students used in this study. This is seen from the chi square calculated (6.88) which is less than the critical chi square value (16.92) at 0.05 probability level and a degree of freedom of 9. The non significant influence observed in this study corroborates with that of Abid (2006) who reported that guidance services have significant effect on the students study attitude, study habits and academic achievement. This result is however in contrast with those of Scarr (1984); Muni (1995); Raiz, Kiran and Malik (2002). Scarr (1984) reported that school achievement of students of educated mothers was good compared to children of non-educated mothers. Muni (1995) observed that children of educated mothers had a positive physical, intellectual and educational self-concept and were better adjusted than the children of non-educated mothers. Raiz, Kiran and Malik (2002) in their study found out that there exist a significant and positive relationship between achievement of the students and the said factors like schedule of study habit of note taking and writing book. It is worthy to note here that the significant differences reported by these researchers are in to academic achievement but not study habits. The researcher believes that the non significant influence observed in this study is as a result of uniform education in Nigeria whereby children of educated and uneducated mothers attend public schools. It would then mean that although mothers may be educated, they do not impart more study habits to their children and wards.

Father's Occupation and Study Habits

With respect to father's occupation the result on Table 2 shows a no significant influence of this factor on the study habits of Physics students used in this study. Students whose fathers work in government and those whose fathers are nongovernment workers do differ significantly in terms of the study habits they employed in studying Physics but their father's occupations do not significantly influence their study habits. This observation agrees with Thakur and Nisha (2007) but disagrees with the findings of Chauhan and Singh (1982), and Krishnaiah (2010). According to Thakur and Nisha, study habits of students do not differ significantly at different types of their father's occupation. But Chauhan and Singh (1982) reported parental profession affects the study habits of children. Redly (2001) observed that father's and mother's occupation has significant influence on the study habits of pupils. Also, Krishnaiah (2010) reported significant influence of

father's and mother's occupation on study habits among intermediate students. From the researcher's point of view, the non significant influence observed in this study comes as a result of public schools which promote interactions between and among the children of various classes of workers involved in this study. Their communications most at times are aimed at helping one another to improve in his/her academic pursuit, thereby bringing them to a common platform in terms of study habits.

Gender and Study Habits

The results on Table 3 indicate that gender exerted no significant influence on the study habits of students used in this study. In other words the study habits of male and female students used in this study proved to be common. This result is in line with those of Mushoriwa (2009). Amatobi and Amatobi (2013) and Awabil, et. al (2013). In contrast the result disagrees with that of Aluya and Blanch (2004), Ossai (2012) and Salami (2013). Mushoriwa (2009) found no significant difference in the study habits of male and female students in Zimbabwe, while Amatobi and Amatobi (2013) found no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in mathematics achievement. In their study, Awabil, et. al (2013) reported that gender was not a significant determinant of study habits. Gender plays an important role in human development and behaviours, just as effective study habits skills promote academic progress. One can also say that the way a human being view himself/herself has significance in developing effective study habits. On the other hand, Aluya and Blanch (2004) found that females scored higher on study habits measure while Ossai (2012) and Salami (2013) in their separate studies reported significant influence of gender on study habits. According to Ossai (2012) females students are better in study habits such as tire scheduling, concentration, listening, note taking and reading. The observed non significant influence in this study may be linked to the fact that both the male and the female students used in this study are from public schools. Their mothers may be either educated or not educated and their fathers may be working in government or not. Both the boys and the girls attend public schools there is that tendency that they enjoy the same privileges, share the same experiences and environment hence may adopt same study habits.

Conclusion

This study investigated demographic variables and students' study habits in Physic in Public Secondary Schools. The variables considered under demographic variables were mother's educational level, father's occupation and gender. To achieve the study objectives, three research questions and three hypotheses were formulated and tested. Based on the findings of this study, the conclusion made is that neither mothers' educational level, nor fathers' occupation, nor gender significantly influence study habits of students used in this study.

Recommendations

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

1. Given the fact that study habits contributes to a more effective and enjoyable study experience schools should give students guidance and counseling services with regard to study habits, so that they may identify their strengths and weakness in the learning strategies and may become more conscious about better study habits.

2. Parents should be involved in monitoring students study habits at home and should provide enabling home environment conducive for effective study habits to be formed.

3. Parents and teachers should help the students to develop the habits of regular study rather than allowing them to exert excessively during the examination time.

4. Teachers should stress relieving study habits and the development of study habits that make learning more enjoyable and prevent waste of energy and time.

5. Students at risk of poor academic achievement should be identified and direct individual and group counseling approaches should be utilized to help them improve their study habits.

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