

Influence of Study Habits on Academic Performance among Undergraduate Students at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi: Counselling Intervention

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Abstract

The study sought to determine the influence of study habits on academic performance among undergraduate students. Causal comparative design was adopted as the design for this study. The population of the study constitutes of 23,271 undergraduate students from the seven Faculties of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed in selecting 1,200 students as sample of this study. An instrument on Study Habit titled “A Study Habit Questionnaire for Predicting Academic Success” was adopted from previous studies relevant to the current research and was used for data collection. The academic performance was measured using students’ Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). The data were analysed using simple regression. Findings from the study show that there was a significant influence of study habits on academic performance of undergraduate students of ATBU, Bauchi. It was recommended that students, especially the low performing ones, need counselling to improve their study habits. Also, group discussion among the students will go a long way in assisting them to learn and understand the basic rudiments of good study habits in tertiary institutions.

Keywords: study, habits, academic, performance, counselling, intervention

Introduction

Students in the university are grappling with many issues in their academic lives. Critical among these is the difficulties they faced in making progressive plans for their studies ahead of exams that measure their performances. Studies have shown that

many students spend most of their time on leisure outside academic activities (Ndu, 2014; Rabia, Mubarak, Tallat & Nasir, 2017). This makes it difficult for them to balance between homework, test and extra curricula activities. Students who are unable to employ good strategy for their studies may face problems in their academic performance. Currently, university students are faced with large amount of information that is difficult to organize. They need good study strategies to attain good scores in their exams (Jafari, Aghaei & Khatony, 2019). Therefore, to advance well, the tertiary institutions' students need to get acquainted to good study habits to organize information for their academic benefit and performance. Study habits are the expected practices a student uses to help him/her study and understand the material and perform well in exams. According to Looyeh, Masoule, Fazelpour and Chehrzad (2017), study habit is a dedicated schedule and uninterrupted time, applies by oneself to the task of learning. In other words, it tells a person the direction to take in his/her reading, how much to read, what to read and how far to go in the reading. Silverrajoo and Hassan (2018) defined study habits as practices a person perform to maximize their productivity, efficiency and retention in preparation for a particular exam. This is part of the personality a student form during his school years to correlate his/her scholastic or academic performance with manipulation of skills learnt. According to Siah and Maiyo (2015), study habits are the habitual practices one uses to help him/her study and learn. Good study habit helps students to achieve and maintain good grades. A student who intends to improve his/her grades needs good study habit rather than cramming or studying long hours. To study is to devote time and thought to acquiring information and skills. It is a practice a student engages in that enables him/her to retain basic information studied. Study habits deals with adopting skills or methods of study that are gradually practiced and repeated until a reading habit is formed. Jafari, Aghaei and Khatony (2019) posited that study habits include behavioural skill that increases motivation and converts the study into effective process with high returns that ultimately increases the learning.

A student's study habit could be good or poor depending on the type of character he/she imbibed in his/her study to progress and pass the different academic levels. Students who do not concentrate in their academic work and engage in bad behaviours like truancy, refusal to write or submit continuous assessments, may likely perform poor academically. Similarly, involvement of students in anti-social behaviour like smoking hemp, substance abuse, addiction or drinking alcohol, violence or bullying are unlikely to organize themselves and have a good study habits (Rimfat, 2014). Researchers in the field explain that good study habit includes being organized, keeping good notes, reading textbooks, listening in class, concentrating, time management and working every day (Rahim & Meon, 2012; Ndu, 2014; Rabia, Mubarak, Tallat & Nasir, 2017). Silverrajoo and Hassan (2018) added that good study habits also make students develop a study area, think positively, create a study group,

read actively and review test taking strategies. Good study habits lead to good academic performance while poor study habits lead to failure (Iliya, Rimfat, Sekuk & Adam, 2009). Therefore, there is need for students to approach their study with the right attitude, choosing the right environment, minimizing distractions, setting a realistic schedule and employing memory games (Siah & Maiyo, 2015).

Good Study habits payback the student by assisting him/her to pass his/her examination, getting better grades, getting a job and developing an interesting hobby. Study habits benefit the students to improve academic performance, foster positive attitudes towards school, learning and work as well as decrease dropouts (Silverrajoo & Hassan, 2018).

Counselling is one of the interventions that help students develop the strategies for their study to progress academically by coming up with a study schedule, which should also include leisure and rest period. Some of the strategies to be employed could be guiding the students to shut-down all distractions, such as watching television, chatting with friends, playing video games, and smart phone notification. Subsequently, these may likely help the students to concentrate and work at the expected rate, and avoid problem in their courses.

The concern by many stakeholders on the low academic performance of university students which is likely due to not employing the right techniques in their study becomes an issue of concern for the researchers. This prompted the need to investigate how students' study habit influence their academic performance and the kind of counselling assistance they may require. To the best of these researchers' knowledge no study has ever been conducted with the undergraduate students on this area in Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. It is in view of these that this study aims at filling this gap at Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, (ATBU) Bauchi.

Statement of the Problem

Undergraduate students are generally preoccupied with social activities in addition to their academics programmes. Some students prefer to sit down the whole day chatting with friends on social network instead of reading their books. Handel and Harrod (2004) posited that University students' reading culture for both recreational and mandatory academic work has declined. This may likely be due to the fact that most of the time, the students are preoccupied on social media and other recreational activities that distract them from their academic work. This usually leads them to perform academically poor, prolong the years they will spend in the university, and sometime withdrawal from university. Many students do not have study plan to guide their studies which is likely to lead them to poor performance in their academic work. Students who are addicted to recreational activities spent much of their time on it,

thereby neglecting their academic work, which in the long run is likely to affect their study pattern. Some students hardly attend classes nor do their assignment or prepare for examination. They spend too much time watching football and chatting, instead of their academic works. All these could be as a result of lack of good study habit which is likely to make them fail their exams and sometimes drop out of school. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to find out the influence of study habits on academic performance among undergraduate students of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, and to proffer counselling intervention for the situation.

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the influence of study habits on academic performance of undergraduate students of ATBU, Bauchi.

Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant influence of study habits on academic performance of undergraduate students.

Methodology

Ex post facto design was employed for this study. The justification for the use of this design is to determine whether one variable (study habits) has influence on another variable (academic performance) (Awotunde & Ugodulunwa, 2014). The population of this study consisted of 23,271 male and female undergraduate students from the seven Faculties of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU), Bauchi. A sample of 1,200 students was drawn as the sample size. The proportionate stratified sampling technique was used in drawing the sample from the seven faculties studying in the academic session of 2018/2019. The sample was drawn based on sampling fraction from the total population in the entire faculties. The hat and draw method was used. Pieces of papers equal to the number of the samples were cut in an equal size. Half of these pieces of papers were written 'yes' on them and the remaining half 'no' were written on them. Any student who selected 'yes' becomes part of the respondents.

The academic performance of the undergraduate students of ATBU, Bauchi was measured using students' Cumulative Grade Points Average (CGPA); whereby students were asked to mention their CGPA on the instrument which was compared with what was obtainable in the departments. The study habits of undergraduate students on the other hand, were measured using an adopted study habits questionnaire titled: "A Study Habit Questionnaire for Predicting Academic Success" from Brown and Holtzman which they developed in 1955. It is a 20 item instrument scaled on a modified Likert scale of 5 points of strongly agree to strongly disagree (Brown & Holtzman, 1955). The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by two experts in Educational Psychology and an expert in Test and Measurement from

Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University. A sample of 100 respondents was drawn and pilot tested in Bauchi State University which is outside the target population. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2013) recommended that when the value of Cronbach Alpha is .70 and above, it is acceptable and sufficient. In the present study, reliability coefficient is .81, suggesting that the instrument is reliable.

Copies of the validated instrument were distributed to 1,500 sampled students selected from the seven faculties of ATBU, Bauchi. Out of the 1,500 questionnaires distributed a total of 1,200 (79.92%) were returned, while 300 (20%) were not returned. The returned copies were thereafter marked and scored in order to determine the influence of study habits on academic performance among undergraduate students.

The simple regression was employed to test the hypothesis because the researchers are interested in describing how the changes in the independent variable (study habits) can influence the dependent variable (academic performance). Frost (2017) posited that regression is used when research question has entwined independent variable that can influence the dependent variable.

Presentation of results

The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance, and the result is as follows:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between study habit and academic performance of undergraduate students.

The hypothesis was tested using regression and the result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Simple Regression analysis of the relationship between study habit and academic performance of undergraduate students

Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	.159	1	.159		
Residual	37.582	1797	.021	7.607	.006
Total	37.741	1798			

The low P-value indicates that the influence of study habits in students' academic performance is statistically significant. The coefficient for academic performance indicates that each additional unit of study habits increases academic performance by approximately 37.582 sum of r-square while controlling everything else in the model. This indicates a significant influence between study habits and academic performance

of undergraduate students. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis was retained.

Discussion of findings

From the result in hypothesis one, it was found that there is a significant influence of study habits on academic performance among undergraduate students of ATBU. Those students with good study habits perform academically better, while students who had poor study habits end up having low performance. This finding confirms the findings of Rahim and Meon (2017) who used a sample of 78 diploma students and measured their academic performance by correlating to their study habits. The result showed a positive correlation with their CGPA achievement. This result coincides with the findings of Rabia, Mubarak, Tallat and Nasir (2017) who found out a significant relationship between study habits and academic performance among 270 medical students. This finding also confirms the result of a similar study by Jafari, Aghaei and Khatony (2019), who found that study habit is a predictor to study achievement among medical science students. The finding of this study however contradicts that of Ndu (2014) who, in a survey among 300 students of higher school, reported no significant influence of study habits on academic performance.

Counselling Intervention

Counselling is the best talking therapy, which is ideal for students who are basically healthy, but need to be helped with coping skills to reduce their current problems as regard their study in the tertiary institutions. As this study reported, students need to be guided in their study habit so that they can perform better. Therefore, the need for counselling for students is paramount. The main concern of counselling here is to make students think more positively toward their studies rather than wasting their time on unproductive activities such as fruitless socialization in the campus, chatting, watching football, playing games, among others. Counselling can guide the students towards better reading strategies and proper utilization of time. The students may be asked to adapt any or combination of the strategies out of many for use in the course of his/her studies. This will help in assisting undergraduate students to utilize study strategies positively for their academic improvement. This study pinpoints so many positive things to be derived from it, which can improve academic performance of students when they adopt the best study skills through counselling intervention on study habits.

Intervention is emergence and temporary care to be given by the counsellor to the client because of an unusual behaviour due to low study habits that rendered the client a failure. The priority of the intervention and counselling is to increase performance and stabilization of the students in studying by balancing their time for leisure and academics, right from the beginning of the semester. The intervention can be given in form of individual or group counselling.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of study habits on academic performance of undergraduate students of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi. A self-structured questionnaire was used to obtain the data for the study. Sample of 1,200 students was used. Findings from the study indicated that there was statistically significant influence of study habits on academic performance of undergraduate students. Therefore, there is need for counselling intervention that can guide the students to utilize good study habit more effectively for better academic performance.

Recommendations

There is a need to sensitize students through counselling to improve their study habits, study skills and group discussion among the students; this will go a long way in assisting them to learn basic rudiments of good study habits in tertiary institutions. Although the study was limited to only Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi, there is a need for similar study in other universities in Nigeria.

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