Truancy and Study Habit as Correlates of Senior Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Rivers State

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Abstract

This study examined truancy and study habit as correlates of senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. The study adopted correlational research design. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The population for this study was 11,237 senior secondary one (SSI) students in the 261 government owned secondary schools in the 23 Local Government Areas of Rivers State. A sample size of 450 SSI students in public schools was used for the study using stratified random sampling technique. Two instruments titled "Students' Truancy Scale (STS)" and "Students' Study Habit Scale" (SSHS) were used for data collection. Students' academic performance was determined by using average test scores of third term in English Language and Mathematics. The reliability of the instrument was determined using test retest method and yielded reliability coefficients of STS ($r=0.83$) and SSHS ($r=0.85$). Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer research questions and test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The finding of the study revealed there was significant relationship between truancy and senior secondary school students' academic performance, there was a significant relationship between time allocated to studying and secondary school students' academic performance and there was a significant relationship between teacher consultation and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. Based on the findings of the study, the study recommended amongst others that the management of public secondary schools in Rivers State should strive to check truancy among students. Also, students should allocate time to themselves for self-development, so that they can develop intellectually, be social beings, and live life to the fullest.

Key Words: **Truancy, study habit, Academic performance, Time allocation, Teacher consultation**

Introduction

Academic performance is used to describe the academic position of a student at a particular moment. Academic performances consign students' ability in exhibiting their scholastic aptitude. Furthermore, this scholastic standing could be explained in terms of grades obtained

in a course or group of courses taken; hence performance is viewed as a determinant of educational outcome (Bassey, 2020).

Obeta (2014) cited in Dike (2022) stated that academic performance is the outcome of education; the degree to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their educational goals. Accordingly, academic performance is commonly measured by examination or continuous assessment. In Nigeria, academic performance is measured majorly by the student's performance in external examinations like West African Examination Council Examinations, National Examination Council examinations, both Senior and Junior, and the Joint Admissions Matriculation Board examinations (Obeta, 2014).

Olanipekun and Aina (2014) stated that students' academic performance is significant because, it shows the criterion of effectiveness and success by which any educational institution could be evaluated. Raby (2013) affirmed a relationship between school dropout rate and criminal behaviour to truancy. Ovink, and Raby, further observed that school dropout has a detrimental consequence on students, hence the need for a harmonized approach to tackle truancy as a phenomenon.

Gentle-Genitty et al. (2015) observed that truant students are prone to engaging in aberrant behaviours and deviant practices, resulting in students being severed from formal school system. Enyiorji (2015) evinced that truancy behaviour is a gateway to delinquency, consisting of illicit drug abuse, gangsterism and in criminal activities such as burglary, auto theft, and vandalism.

Rivers (2010) identified some causative factors of truancy, which may be a signpost for post-traumatic stress disorder, nervousness, dejection, and substance abuse. Likewise, alcohol use by a student, at-least once or more times in a month, may viably neglect school, but if the alcohol use gets to intoxication, there may be an increased probability of school skipping. Additionally, truant students who smoke cigarettes or marijuana at least once a month hold lower self-perception and are more likely to skip school than students with high self-perception (Rivers, 2010). These can affect their academic performance. Students who exhibit truancy, are deficient in devotion to school, are poor achievers, and hold low future ambition. Thus, truancy indicates extensive consequences, ensuing in harmful repercussion for numerous levels of society. Consequently, truancy may predict substance abuse, maladjustment, delinquency, poor academic performance, and school dropout (Rivers, 2010). Rabia et al. (2017) opined that study habits are correlates of academic performance. Therefore, study habit is a student's committed, planned, and continuously applying him or

herself to learning tasks. Study habit notifies a student on how much to learn, but in the absence of it, the student's academic growth becomes limiting. However, there exist differences in the study habit of students that may determine the degree of the students' academic performance. Study habit contributes extensively to the improvement of reading proficiency and understanding of subjects. Palani (2012) noted that study habit is an indispensable and imperative aspect for creating a knowledgeable society. Similarly, students' study habits form their personality throughout life and help them to acquire appropriate judgment technique, and to generate new ideas.

Okanezi and Braide (2018) stated that, habit is a behaviour exhibited without thinking and particularly somewhat hard to stop. A person's habit is composed of inimitable behaviour of how exact things are done or allowed by such an individual. Habit therefore, is relative because each individual acts distinctively. Thus, the common attitude and disposition of individual study habits is dissimilar. Okanezi and Braide (2018) averred that to study entails the practice of intellectual capacity utilization to gain, comprehend and arrange information repeatedly in the course of formal learning and topic mastery. Therefore, study habits comprise behaviours and skills that can spur stimulus and translate the study into an efficient procedure with high rewards, which ultimately increases learning. Hashemian and Hashemian (2014) affirmed study habit as any action that increases the cognitive operation of learning around a subject, resolving difficulties or committing to memory a part or the whole learning material. Hence, study habits skill gives access to success or failure academically.

Braide (2018) opined that study habit is the penchant learners have acquired in relation to secluded studying over time. Thus, a student's learning disposition is categorized by his study habits. Therefore, study habits are the practice of executing abilities of learners in knowledge acquisition for mastery. Consequently, study habits are the various orientations, processes, procedures and scheme adopted by individual students while studying, and this, functions as guidance for learning. Thus, individual behaviour is steered by habit, and in the studying process, the different habits or skills students espouse define their academic performance.

Adepoju and Oluchukwu (2011) decried the persistent poor performance of secondary school students in public examinations such as the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE) in Nigeria in recent times. Education industry stakeholders and researchers have identified several factors as the causes of poor performance of students in public examinations. Hence, truancy, study habit and stress may affect the academic performance of students in certificate examinations. Consequently, the thrust of this investigation therefore, is to ascertain truancy

and study habit as correlates of students' academic performance in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Truancy is defined as incessant illegal nonattendance to class or school. Truancy may be acknowledged differently. Rivers (2010) observed that truancy, or the regular act of being absent from school without authorization, is a foremost concern disturbing the overall success of secondary school students academic performance; and Reid as cited in Rivers (2010) explicitly identified school attendance as the sole most significant variable in appraising students' performance levels; it is necessary therefore, that remedial measures be taken against chronic absenteeism or truancy.

Ma'aruf as cited in Oluremi (2013) acknowledged home truancy factors as; children and parents poor relationship; poor home physical conditions; use of corporeal chastisement; lack of parental attention in the child's wellbeing. School is also a factor for the development of truancy. When there is breakdown of communication between school principals and teachers, excess student population, dearth of teachers, teacher's unjustified application of bodily reprimand and negative peer influence are connected with truancy. Furthermore, truancy may be caused by bullying of students by non- teaching staff, tediousness, loathing for teachers and evading of tests, amongst secondary school students.

Onele (2016) opined that truancy is routine absenteeism from school or classroom task. Accordingly, truancy manifests as late attendance to school or class lesson, resumption of school weeks behind, without any authorization or explanation, and absconding from school activities. However, because secondary school students are in their transition stage, truancy is more rampant. Likewise, secondary school students are in the adolescence stage of development when various objectionable behaviours are exhibited. Furthermore, Onele (2016) averred that a student is reckoned a truant if she/he fails to conform to preset regulation and order in regular school attendance. A student who stays away from school, roam about the streets, and returns home late in the day devoid of accomplishing any scholastic goal is regarded as a truant.

Studying is an activity involving scholastic acquisition of knowledge through the curious examination of phenomena, either from books, magazines, newspapers and journals, or through the probing of events in the world. Braide (2018) is a structured acquirement of knowledge, a rationalization of information and principles that is embedded in the memory for recall and practice. Okoroduduin et al. (2018) saw study as the usage of individual's rational aptitude in the acquisition, comprehension and understanding of knowledge

repeatedly; involving several techniques of prescribed scholarship. Likewise, study is regarded as a path of subject dexterity, and thus, demands assiduousness from the individual engaged in it. Therefore, studying implies the process of acquiring facts from printed medium; for example knowledge stockpiled in printed resources.

Azikiwe (2018) described study habit as "the adopted way and manner a student plans his private studies or reading, after classroom learning so as to attain mastery of the subject. Azikiwe (2018) further stated that "good study habit are good asset to learners because the habit assists students to attain mastery in areas of specialization and consequent excellent performance, while the opposite bad study habits of academic performance, constitute constraints to learning and achievement leading to failure. Good (2018) defined the term study habit as the student's way of study whether systematic, efficient or inefficient, etc. going by this definition it literally means that good study habit produces positive academic achievement while inefficient study habit leads to academic failure.

A child's learning outcomes is what is meant by academic performance. Therefore the knowledge, skills and ideas, acquired through their course of study within and outside the classroom situation are included, (Okorie, 2014). It is the outcome of purpose and hard work, of students in their academic endeavor. Okorie (2014) further defined academic performance of pupils as the scores obtained in the subjects they studied in school. This establishes the pupils' grade in class, gives them prospect to develop their endowment, and advance their plan for future academic pursuits.

Academic performances signify to a person's performance in a given academic area for instance, reading or language arts, mathematics, science and other areas of human learning. Likewise, academic performance indicates the academic subjects a child learns in school and the expected skills mastered by the pupil in each subject (Kathryn, 2010). Academic performance denotes excellence in academic discipline irrespective of the subject in classroom tasks, and also in extra-curricular activities. Thus, excellence in sporting behaviour, confidence, communication skills, and etcetera are inclusive.

Consequently, evaluation of academic performance is carried out in multiple ways. Thus, students are graded through written and oral tests, submission of homework, seminar presentations and participating in class activities and discussions, demonstrating their knowledge and mastery of subject matter. Teachers evaluate using assignments, tests and examinations to exhibit students' performance. Poor academic achievement is a performance

that is adjudged by the examiner and some significant others as falling below an expected standard (Okorie, 2014).

Oluremi (2013) investigated the relationship between truancy and academic performance of secondary school students in South-western Nigeria. The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between truancy and academic performances of students; there was no significant relationship between the school physical environment and truancy behaviour among students; there was no significant difference between the academic performance of male and female truants. However, the study concluded that truancy hindered effective learning and could lead to poor academic performance.

Musa (2014) investigated absenteeism and truancy and their impact on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ogun State. The finding of the study revealed that peer group factors, socio economic background of the students, poor academic performance of students, are contributory factors to absenteeism and truancy in our secondary schools. Aggarwal (2017) carried out a study on the impact of time allocation on academic success in college students' study habit of Indian Secondary Schools. The finding of the study revealed that adequate time allocation for private study is an academic stress management. The study concluded that if study habit or skills are effective in decreasing stress, students have a greater chance for academic success.

Sakirudeen and Sanni (2017) conducted a study on Study Habits and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Mathematic: A Case Study of selected Secondary Schools in Uyo Local Education Council. The finding of the study revealed that there was significant relationship between note taking, students' use of library, time allocation for study and students' academic performance in mathematics. Barbarasch (2013) examined how teacher consultation can improve general education, teachers' use of praise in the classroom as well as the behavior functioning of their students, as perceived by the teacher. The study revealed that teachers' consultation for academic purposes significantly increase students' academic performance. The study also indicated that teachers' consultation reported improvements in teachers' behaviour, thus creating a conducive learning atmosphere.

Statement of the Problem

The abysmal performance of secondary school students in Senior School Certificate Examination had made it difficult for majority of students to gain admission into higher institutions of learning in recent times. The culture of reading among students is gradually going into extinction. They spend more of their times on things such as playing games with

phones, watching television, whiling away their times talking with their peer group. There is high level of poor concentration in academic work, such students may show poor attitude to school work, lateness to school and classes, disrespect for school rules and regulations, poor teacher-student relationships, bullying of other students.

Students' factors of poor academic performance may be due to poor study habits, emotional adjustment dilemma, school dislike, low-retention memory, negative peer influence, low achievement motivation and psychological problems. Other factors may include absenteeism, truancy, lack of interest in classroom lessons and learning disability. The poor level and decline in the quality of students' academic performance in Nigeria has become a national concern, and one of the contemporary educational problems of public interest. Hence, this study sought to investigate truancy and study habit as correlates of secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine truancy and study habit as correlates of senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. Specifically, the study would achieve the following objectives;

1. Find out the relationship between truancy and academic performance of senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

2. Find out the relationship between time allocated to personal studying and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State.

3. Find out the relationship between teacher consultation and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The understated research questions guided the conduct of this research.

1. To what extent does truancy relate to secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State?

2. To what extent does time allocated to personal studying relate to secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State?

3. To what extent does teacher consultation relate to secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were raised to guide this research at 0.05 significant level:

1. There is no significant relationship between truancy and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State.

2. There is no significant relationship between time allocated to personal studying and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State.

3. There is no significant relationship between teacher consultation and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State.

Methodology

The research design for this study is correlational design. The population of this study comprised 11,236 SS1 students in the 261government owned secondary schools in the 23 Local Government Areas in Rivers State.(Source :RMOE2018/2019 enrolment figure of students in public school).

The sample size for this study was 350 students which was derived using stratified and simple random sampling. Rivers State was divided into three senatorial districts. From each district, the researcher was selected ten secondary schools and 150 students. This make it a total of 30 secondary schools and 450 students. Therefore, the total sample of students to be studied is 450.

The instruments titled "Students' Truancy Scale" (STS) and "Students' Study Habit Scale" (SSHS) was used for data collection by the researchers. The items on the instruments were responded to on a four point modified likert rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE), and Very Low Extent (VLE), to be rated 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. Students' academic performance was determined by using average test scores in English Language and Mathematics.

The instrument was tested for reliability through a test-retest method, with a reliability coefficient for STS ($r = 0.83$) and SSHS ($r=0.85$), ascertained through the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistic.

The copies of the questionnaire were administered to and retrieved from the respondents at the various schools selected in the sample. The total of 350 copies of the questionnaire administered and 350 copies retrieved were properly filled, and thus used for further analysis. The collected data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to answer the research questions and test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The

analyses of data was done using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The result of the hypotheses was tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One

 To what extent does truancy relate to senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State?

Hypothesis One

 There is no significant relationship between truancy and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State.

Table 1:   Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Truancy and Senior Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Rivers State

		Truancy	Academic Performance
Truancy	Pearson Correlation	1	0.15^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00
	n	450	450
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.15^{**}	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	
	n	450	450

Table 1 shows the extent to which truancy relate to senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. As such, the answer to research question one is that the relationship that exist between truancy and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State is very weak (r = 0.15). The implication of this result is that the extent of relationship between truancy and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State is very weak since the correlation coefficient (r = 0.15) is within the range of r ≤ ±0.10 to ±0.19.

Furthermore, table 1 showed that the test to hypothesis one indicated that there is a very weak correlation (r = 0.15, r ≤ ±0.10 to ±0.19), between truancy and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. Thus, since p-value = 0.00 < 0.05, there was significant relationship between truancy and senior secondary school students' academic

performance in Rivers State, hence null hypothesis one is rejected at the 0.05 significance level.

Research Question Two

To what extent does time allocated to personal studying relate to senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between time allocated to personal studying and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State.

Table 2: **Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Time Allocated to Studying and Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Rivers State**.

		Time allocated to study	Academic Performance
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.77**
Time allocated to study	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00
	N	450	450
	Pearson Correlation	0.77**	1
Academic Performance	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	
	N	450	450

Table 2 shows the extent to which time allocated to studying relate to secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. As such, the answer to research question three is that the relationship that exist between time allocated to studying and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State is strong (r = 0.77). The implication of this result is that the extent of relationship between time allocated to studying and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State is strong since the correlation coefficient (r = 0.77) is within the range of r ≤ ±0.60 to ±0.79.

Furthermore, Table 2 showed that the test to hypothesis two indicated that there is a strong correlation (r = 0.77, r ≤ ±0.60 to ±0.79), between time allocated to studying and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. Thus, since p-value = 0.00 < 0.05, there is significant relationship between time allocated to studying and secondary school

students' academic performance in Rivers State, hence null hypothesis three is rejected at the 0.05 significance level.

Research Question Three

To what extent does teacher consultation relate to senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between teacher consultation and senior secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State.

Table 3: **Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Analysis on the Relationship between Teacher Consultation and Secondary School Students' Academic Performance in Rivers State**

		Teacher Consultation	Academic Performance
	Pearson Correlation	1	0.67^{**}
Teacher Consultation	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00
	N	450	450
	Pearson Correlation	0.67^{**}	1
Academic Performance	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	
	N	450	450

Table 3 shows the extent to which teacher consultation relate to secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. As such, the answer to research question five is that the relationship that exist between teacher consultation and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State is strong (r = 0.67). The implication of this result is that the extent of relationship between teacher consultation and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State is strong since the correlation coefficient (r = 0.67) is within the range of r $\leq$ ±0.60 to ±7.99.

Furthermore, Table 3 showed that the test to hypothesis three indicated that there is a strong correlation (r = 0.67, r $\leq$ ±0.60 to ±7.99), between teacher consultation and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. Thus, since p-value = 0.00 < 0.05, there is significant relationship between teacher consultation and secondary school students'

academic performance in Rivers State, hence null hypothesis five is rejected at the 0.05 significance level.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the relationship between truancy and study habit with academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. However, the result in table 1 revealed that the extent of relationship between truancy and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State is very weak. Furthermore, the result of hypothesis one indicated that there was significant relationship between truancy and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. The finding of this study is supported by the study of Oluremi (2013), which revealed that there was a significant relationship between truancy and academic performances of students. Furthermore, Musa (2014) opined that peer group factors, socio economic background of the students, poor academic performance of students, are contributory factors to absenteeism and truancy in our secondary schools.

The result in table 2 shows that the extent of relationship between time allocated to personal studying and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State is strong. While the result of the tested hypothesis two indicated that, there was significant relationship between time allocated to studying and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. This finding is in agreement with the study of Ogundipe and Falade (2014) which revealed that time spent attending lectures, self-study and work group and or tutorials was positively correlated with their academic performance. Furthermore, Ogunniyi and Nwalo, (2016) revealed that there was a significant relationship between time allocation and academic achievement of undergraduates in cataloguing and classification in library schools.

The result in table 3 shows that the extent of relationship between teacher consultation and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State was strong. Furthermore, the result of the tested hypothesis three indicated that there was significant relationship between teacher consultation and secondary school students' academic performance in Rivers State. These results are consistent with the results from the findings of Barbarasch (2013), which revealed that teachers' use of academic and behavioral praise significantly increased following consultation in all three groups.

Conclusion

The study investigated the relationship between truancy and study habits with the academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. However, the findings of the study showed that homework and assignments and concentration had a very strong correlation with

students' academic performance. Also, time allocated to studying and teacher consultation had a strong correlation with students' academic performance. The implication of these results is that in order to improve students' academic performance in secondary schools, they must: increase the amount of time allocated to homework and assignments; make daily reports

Furthermore, the findings from the study revealed that truancy had a very weak relationship with students' academic performance in Rivers State, the implication of these results is that in order to improve students' academic performance in Rivers State, teachers must spend more time on academic counselling, parent-teacher communication, and tutoring; and allocate adequate resources to enhance parental involvement. Based on the findings of the study on the relationship between truancy and study habits with the academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State, it can be concluded that the increase in the allocated time for homework and assignments and teacher consultation will facilitate students' academic performance.

Counselling Implications

The following were some of the counselling implications:

1. Guidance counselling units should be established in all public secondary schools in Rivers State. The State Government should as a matter of urgency, employ the services of qualified and trained counsellors, who will be in charge of the counselling units/centres to provide counselling to meet the academic and psychological needs of the students.

2. Guidance counsellors should carryout seminars and symposiums on the role of teachers on students' academic such as teachers' consultations, teacher-students relationship, teacher-parents relationship and the community relationship with the school. This will further create a peaceful learning environment and higher academic performance of students.

Recommendations

Considering the findings, discussion and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The management of public secondary schools in Rivers State should strive to improve their performance by raising the academic standards in their schools to check truancy among students.

2. Students should allocate time to themselves for self-development, so that they can develop intellectually, be social beings, and live life to the fullest.

3. Teacher consultation should be adopted in all state secondary schools in Rivers State to create a more positive learning environment.

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