

**ASSESSMENT OF “STUDY –SKILLS KNOWLEDGE” OF SENIOR  
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS, FOR IMPROVED ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE**

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***Abstract***

*The study assessed the knowledge of the study-skills of senior secondary students in Ebonyi State, for improved academic performance. Four research questions and one null hypothesis guided the study. Survey research design was adopted for the study. A total of 1,831 students were randomly selected for the study out of the population of 28,621 senior secondary school students. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire on the study-skills developed by the researchers and validated by the experts. The data collected was analyzed using percentage, mean and standard deviation for the research questions and z-test statistics for the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Based on the results, the study revealed that most senior secondary school students have no information on the study-skills, have no knowledge of study-skills, and are not aware of the types of study-skills. In view of the above, all the students overwhelmingly agreed with the suggested study guides that will improve academic Performance of the students. The paper recommends that Government and Stakeholders in Education Sector should adopt the study among other things.*

**Keywords: Study-skill, study guide, study-habit, types of study skills**

**Introduction**

Study could be viewed as the effort made to gain knowledge through reading and writing. It could also be seen as time and effort spent in reading in order to understand detail analysis of a subject or situation. To study also involve doing practical work or carrying out experiment. On the other hand, to study is equally to learn. Learning is gaining knowledge of or skills in something. Study skill is learning how to learn more effective for the purpose of improving performance.

According to Ibe and Ikoro (2016) study skills are the approaches applied to learning, which are generally critical to success in schools. It is considered very essential for acquiring good grades and useful learning throughout one's life. Carey (2015) stated that study skills are array of skills which encompasses the process of organizing and taking in new information, retaining information and dealing with assessments of information. The acquisition of good study skills lead to purposeful and goal oriented learning.

They are different types of study skills, which include;

1. **Mind-maps:** Mind maps, helped people to remember key facts. To develop a mind map, all you need is a sheet of paper, put the topic/subject in beautiful middle of the page, with branches coming off of it. On each branch you should only write key words and for every key words you write, you should put the first image that comes into your head when you think of this keyword. For example oxygen-tree, Astronomy-star, star-telescope etc.
2. **Memorization.** This is the process of committing something to memory. The act of memorization is often a deliberate mental process under taken in order to store in memory for latter recall. This also include rote learning. One of the most basic approaches to learning any information is simply memorizing over notes or a textbook and rewriting notes.
3. **Flash cards:** these are visual cues or cards. There have numerous uses in teaching and learning including for revision. A4 size paper is normally use, and short summary facts written on it for constant revision.
4. **Key word:** large information from course book are briefly written into notes. These notes are then condensed further into key facts. These include:
  - **Organized summaries:** such as outline showing key words, definitions etc (in a tree stature)
  - **Spider diagram:** it is an effective way of linking concepts together. This tool can give a visual structure, with lines used to show how different parts link together.
5. **Visual imagery:** here visual techniques are used to encode and retain it in memory.
6. **Diagrams are very important:** they aid to recall information.
7. **Acronyms and mnemonics**
  - **Acronyms** is a word made up from the first letter of the name of something. Such as an institution or organization for example UNN is an acronym to University of Nigeria Nsukka.
  - **A mnemonic** is a method of organizing information. Some use a simple phrase or fact to represent longer list or information. Example is the compass: North, East, South and West it could be come phrased as (never eat shredded wheat.)
8. **Spacing:** The theory of spacing is that instead of cramming all, studying into one long study session, an individual will split that single session to a few shorter session that are hours, or days part. The science behind this is according to Host's law if two association are of equal strength but of different age, a new repetition has a greater value for the older ones. This means that, if a person were to study two things once, at different times, it will be easier to recall the one studies last.
9. **Time Management:** It is a study session aim to ensure that activities that achieve the greatest benefits are given the greatest focus and attention. here a traffic light is used.
  - **Green:** topic to be studies first (important and simple)
  - **Amber:** topic to be studied next (important, but time consuming)

- Red: lowest priority (complex and not vital)
- 10. Study Environment: Study under quiet conducive environment not in a noisy place, keep away your handsets, television, video films etc. Also vary your study environment during your personal study. Example in the room, under the Tree or outside the house etc.
- 11. Relaxation: Create enough time to sleep and relax your self (brain). It is a proven fact that sleeping more can help you study better.

In teaching and developing good study skills in students emphases should also be laid on inculcating appropriate and effective study habits. According to Becton (2019), they are ten habits of highly effective study. They key to becoming an effective study student is learning how to study well. That if you want to be a successful student, do not get discouraged, do not give up, just work to develop each of the study habits and you will see your performance/grade improved and go high, your knowledge increase, and your ability to learn and assimilate information improve. Students need to inculcate the following study habits.

- Do not attempt to cram all your studying in one session. Have short periods as you study and don't cram long passages but short/brief ones.
- Plan when you are going to study: schedule specific time table throughout the week when you are going to study. Create and set aside period of time in the days of a week to read and review your courses.
- Study at the same time. Create a consistent, daily study routine. When you study at the same time each day and each week, your studying will become a regular part of your life. You will be mentally and emotionally more prepared for each study session and each study session will become more productive.
- Each study time should have a specific goal: you need to know what you need to accomplish during each study session (eg. 30 mins is for -20 min -etc)
- Never procrastinate your planned study session. Do not put off you study session because the course is hard or you lack interest.
- Start with the most difficult subject first. As your most difficult assignment or subject will require the most effort and mental energy, you should start with it first.
- Always review your notes before starting an assignment. Review your notes before each study session, will help you remember important subject matter learned during the day.
- Make sure that you are not distracted when you are studying. Example put of your hand-phone, TV, Radio, and friends.
- Use study group effectively: it is said that two good heads are better than one.
- Review your notes always. School work and other class materials should be reviewed at weekend. Successful students review what they are learning during the week or over the weekend.

To inculcate the above study habits in students, they need to be taught and exposed to the techniques by the teachers. It is unfortunate that teachers hardly teach the students study skills, probably because they themselves were not taught. Structured interview carried out by the researchers among the senior secondary school students showed that study skill is not taught and is not contain or included in their syllabus. This aspect of learning is grossly ignored and neglected, with the hope that the moment students are taught, they will know how to study on their own to succeed. The much most students can do is to cram and memorize points and short passages. The complete lack of study skills lead to poor performance of many students. The knowledge and acquisition of study skill is an art and technique for the mastery of any subject matter. It is therefore the desire of the researchers to find out the study skill knowledge of public senior secondary school students in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

### **Research questions**

The following research questions guided the study.

1. To what extent do senior secondary school students have information about study skills.
2. How knowledgeable are senior secondary students on study skills.
3. What is the level of awareness of senior secondary school students on the types of study-skills.
4. To what extent can each of the following study habits constitute a guide for the students effective study skills for improved academic performance.

### **Hypothesis**

1. There is no significant ( $P < 0.05$ ) difference between the mean ratings of male and female students on the effective study habits for improved academic performance

### **Method**

#### **Design**

In carrying out this research, the researchers adopted the survey research design.

### **Population and sample**

The population for this study comprised all the 28, 621 senior secondary students in 225, secondary schools in Ebonyi State (Secondary Education Board, Abakaliki, 2018). The sample of the study was 1,83,. Senior Secondary School Students representing 5% of the student's population.

### **Instrument**

The instrument used for data collection for this study was the study skills knowledge of senior secondary school students (SSKSSSS) questionnaire. The instrument consisted of two parts. Part A –sought information on the background of the respondents, while part B sought information on study skill knowledge of students

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by experts. After scrutinizing the instrument, they made useful suggestion which were reflected in the final version of the instrument.

**Data collection procedure**

Copies of the instrument were distributed to the various schools, through the help of research assistants. The instrument were filled and collected on the spot, which ensured 100 percent return rate.

**Data analysis**

Percentage, mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions, while z-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance

**Result**

**Table 1: percentage of senior secondary school students who have heard about study-skills**

Sex	Have information	Have no information	Total
Male - 827	101 (12.2%)	726 (87.8%)	827 (100%)
Female – 1004	186 (18.5%)	818 (81.5%)	1004 (100%)

From the data on table above, it could be observed that the percentage of senior secondary students who have information is 12.2% for male and 18.5% for female. While those who have no information is 87.8% for male and 81.5% for female. The percentages of those having no information are very high

**Table 2: level of senior secondary school students knowledge of the study skills by sex**

S/N	TYPES OF STUDY SKILLS	MALE	FEMALE
1	Mind maps	6 (0.7%)	15 (1.5%)
2	Cramming and memorization	827 (100%)	1004 (100%)
3	Flash cards and keywords	96 (11.6%)	178 (17.7%)
4	Visual imagery	4 (0.48%)	7 (0.7%)
5	Acronym and spacing	413 (50%)	251 (25%)
6	Time management	206 (25%)	502 (50%)
7	Diagramming	33 (10%)	201 (20%)
8	Relaxation	192(23.2%)	3.56 (35.4%)

The result of table 2 showed that both male and female students have no knowledge on the types of study skills except on cramming and memorization which they have one hundred percent (full) knowledge.

**Table 3: extent of awareness of senior secondary school students on the types of study skills.**

Sex	Very high	High	Low	Very low	Total
Male (827)	6 (0.7%)	9 (1.5%)	619 (75%)	193 (22.8%)	827 (100%)
Female (1004)	15 (1.5%)	23 (2.3%)	760 (75.7%)	206 (20.7%)	1004 (100%)

The data in table 3, revealed that majority of senior secondary school students are not aware of the types of study skills. It is indicated on the number and percentage of the students (male and female) who indicated high and very high awareness and those who indicate low and very low awareness.

**Table 4: Study guide that constitute effective study habits for improved academic performance.**

S/N	Items	Male (827)		Female (1004)	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1	Preparation of study time table weekly or monthly	3.84	0.65	3.91	0.56
2	Setting a specific time and goal for each study period	3.70	0.75	3.80	0.68
3	Do not procrastinate your planned study session	3.66	0.81	3.53	0.90
4	Start your study with the most difficult subject	3.68	0.80	3.62	0.85
5	Start study from the simplest to the most difficult concept.	3.53	0.90	2.87	1.16
6	Cram short/brief passages or assignments	3.50	0.92	2.90	1.15
7	Review your previous lesson before starting the new ones.	3.80	0.68	3.02	0.99
8	Keep away from all destructors when studying	2.91	1.14	2.55	1.21
9	Join effective study group.	2.87	1.16	2.56	1.20
10	Review your notes and assignments over the weekend.	3.04	0.98	2.73	1.18
11	Create time for exercise and relaxation	2.87	1.02	2.52	1.24
12	Have enough sleep at night	3.37	0.88	2.51	1.25
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	3.39	0.87	3.04	0.98

The result on table 4 indicated an over whelming positive response on all the items as study guides that constitute effective study habits. Hence all rated above the cut-off mean of 2.5. the grand mean for male is 3.39 with SD 0.87 while the female is 3.04 with SD 0.98.

**Tables 5. Z-test of significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female senior secondary school students with regards to study guides.**

Sex	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab.	Sig
Male	827	3.39	0.87	1,829	0.08	1.96	No Sig
Female	1004	3.04	0.98				

Table 5, showed that at 0.05 level of significance and 1829 degree of freedom, the t-calculated of 0.08 is less than the t-critical of 1.96. therefore, the null hypothesis was upheld, that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female students with regards to study guide for effective study habits.

### Discussion and conclusion

The results of this present study have revealed to a great extent the state of the art, with respect to the study skills among students. From the study, it was observed that the percentage of senior secondary school students who are presently without any information on study habits/skills is very high. This will limit the ability of the students to perform well academically: therefore, this underscores the need for the introduction of study skills in school whiles workshops and conferences could be organized in this area. The study also showed that the students level of knowledge on the types of study skills is very low. They are completely bereft and ignorant of any type of study skill, except cramming and memorization. Equally their awareness level is very low. The students unanimously agreed on the study guide suggested that will constitute effective study habits for improved academic performance.

### Recommendations

The researchers hope that both the government and education stakeholders should adopt this study and include “study skills” in the secondary school curriculum. For it will greatly improve the students performance. Also teachers should be taught the concept and practice of study skills through workshops and seminars.

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