

Study Habit as Correlate of Scholastic Adjustment Among Public Secondary School Students in Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study examined the relationship between study habits (group study, teacher consultation, and note-taking) and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. A correlational research design was adopted. A sample of 450 valid responses was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that group study had a significant moderate positive relationship with scholastic adjustment ($r = .453, p < .05$), while teacher consultation ($r = .712, p < .05$) and note-taking ($r = .801, p < .05$) showed significant high positive relationships with scholastic adjustment. The study concludes that effective study habits significantly enhance students' academic, social, and emotional adjustment in school. Recommendations and counselling implications were provided.*

Keywords: study habits, scholastic adjustment, group study, teacher consultation, note-taking, secondary school students

INTRODUCTION

Scholastic adjustment is increasingly recognized as a multidimensional construct encompassing students' academic engagement, social integration, and emotional well-being within school contexts. Successful adjustment to school environments has been linked to improved academic performance, reduced dropout rates, and enhanced psychosocial development. As educational systems globally strive to improve student outcomes, understanding the factors that facilitate or hinder students' scholastic adjustment has become a major research priority. Theoretical

frameworks such as self-regulated theory and social-cognitive theory posits that students' actively regulate their learning through behaviours such as planning, monitoring, and evaluating their academic activities. Study habits including time management, regular study routines, strategic note-taking, assignment completion, and help-seeking behaviours are considered core components of self-regulated learning and have been consistently associated with academic achievement. However, while the relationship between study habits and academic performance is well documented, less attention has been given to how these habits relate broader aspects of scholastic adjustment. In many low and middle-income educational contexts, including sub-Saharan Africa, students face structural and contextual challenges such as limited educational resources, overcrowded classrooms, and socio-economic constraints, which may affect both their learning behaviours and adjustment to school. In Nigeria, particularly in public secondary schools, concerns have been raised regarding student's poor academic engagement, maladaptive school behaviours, and low academic achievement. Despite these challenges, empirical research in the region has predominantly focused on academic performance outcomes, with relatively limited investigation into students' holistic scholastic adjustment.

Moreover, existing global models of scholastic adjustment are largely based on data from Western educational contexts, raising concerns about their applicability in diverse cultural and educational settings. There is therefore a need for context-specific empirical evidence to extend and refine theoretical models of student adjustment.

Against this background, the present study examines study habits and scholastic adjustment among public secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. By exploring the relationship between learning behaviours and students' academic, social and emotional adaptation to school, the study aims to contribute to the international literature on student self-regulation and scholastic adjustment and provide evidence-based recommendations for educational practice and policy.

Objectives of the Study

The study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between group study and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State;
2. Examine the relationship between teacher consultation and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State;

3. Assess the relationship between note-taking and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State;

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between group study and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between teacher consultation and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State?
3. What is the relationship between note taking and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between group study and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
2. There is no significant relationship between teacher consultation and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.
3. There is no significant relationship between note-taking and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Students' study habits vary depending on their peers and from region to region. It is a crucial component of education since students' success in the classroom is mostly determined by their study habits. It is essential for expressing the caliber of instruction and proficiency of the student. It is unrealistic to expect students to pick up all the knowledge they need about a subject from their teachers in the classroom; instead, students' study habits are a result of their combined classroom and extracurricular learning. Students with unique study habits will perform differently from those with varied study habits. It is thought that students who do not have access to efficient and productive study methods will be built on shaky foundations, which will lead to weak foundations. Although all of the students receive instruction from the same teachers, there are differences in the

grades of the student's, some students learn quickly than others. When faced with these circumstances, teachers become perplexed and attempt or push too much (Onoshakpokaiye, 2022). Islam (2021) describes study habits as routine learning practices that take place from the beginning to the end of all educational courses. It also, refers to repeated practices that endear students' to finish their course work (i.e. whole practices during learning activities). These practices can include things like designating specific study time, setting up a calm and orderly study area, segmenting study sessions into manageable chunks, utilizing efficient study methods such as flashcards and summarization, and routinely reviewing the content.

Types of Study Habit

Group Study

Group study is more than just a review exercise; it is a collaborative learning process where students exchange ideas, rehearse content, and engage in joint academic task. Cappella et al. (2019) opined that group study involves gaining knowledge, rehearsing learnt materials and embarking on other scholastic ventures in groups. A group is a collection of two or more persons who interacts with one another in such a way that each person influences and is influenced by the other. Group study offers numerous benefits, including: collaborative learning, diverse perspectives, motivation, shared resources, support system, feedback and critique (Cappella et al., 2019). Chen and Yang (2019) disclosed that, group work and study groups are everywhere in schools and have been shown to benefit students in terms of their performance and learning. They said that, when dealing with the complex and sophisticated problems facing many learners, the shared and complementary skills and knowledge of a group may be beneficial in processing information (Swanson et al., 2019). When students teach themselves something, it may enhance their own levels of germane load for that particular unit of information (Hefter & Berthold, 2020).

Teacher Consultation

Teacher consultation is an important element of scholastic adjustment, as it enables students to clarify difficult concepts, receive constructive feedback, and strengthen their academic engagement. Clarke (2020) disclosed that teacher consultation as a study habit refers to the regular practice of meeting with a teacher or instructor to discuss academic progress, clarify doubts, and seek guidance on improving study habits and performance. Kumari and kamala (2022) advanced that it involves actively seeking help and feedback from a teacher to: Clarify concepts and understand material better, discuss learning goals and strategies, get feedback on assignments and progress, identify areas for improvement, stay motivated and accountable, address challenges and obstacles and enhance understanding and grades.

Teacher consultation is a common practice in schools from time immemorial. It is what transpires in school or non-school settings when a student visits a teacher for clarification, enlightenment, suggestion or allied scholastic purpose. Darling-Hammond et al. (2023) disclosed that teacher consultation is a vital aspect of professional development and the overall educational process. It refers to the process by which teachers collaborate with colleagues, specialists, or experts to address educational challenges, improve teaching practices, and enhance student learning outcomes. It is worthy of note that in recent years, teacher consultation has gained significant importance as schools and educational systems worldwide recognize the need for collaborative approaches to meet the evolving needs of students, the curriculum, and educational environments.

Relevance of Teacher Consultation

Smith and Johnson (2022) informed that one of the primary benefits of teacher consultation is the fostering of collaborative professional growth. Teachers often face complex challenges in their classrooms, ranging from addressing diverse learning needs to integrating new educational technologies. Consultation offers teachers the opportunity to seek advice, share insights, and explore innovative strategies that can improve their teaching methods. By engaging in consultation, teachers can gain new perspectives, learn from the experiences of others, and refine their pedagogical approaches.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2023) found that teacher consultation is linked to improved instructional practices and student achievement. When teachers collaborate through consultation, they are more likely to engage in reflective practices and adopt evidence-based strategies that have been shown to be effective in diverse educational settings. This can result in higher levels of student engagement, motivation, and academic success.

Teacher Consultation and Scholastic Adjustment

Smith and Johnson (2022) observed that teacher consultation also plays a crucial role in addressing the diverse needs of students. In many classrooms, students come with varying abilities, backgrounds, and learning preferences. Consultation allows teachers to collaborate with specialists, such as special education professionals or counselors, to identify strategies for supporting students with different needs (Vyas, 2021). This can include individualized instruction, differentiated learning strategies, or interventions for students facing emotional or behavioral challenges.

For example, research by Smith and Johnson (2022) emphasizes the importance of teacher consultation in addressing mental health concerns among students. Teachers who regularly consult

with school counsellors or psychologists can better recognize signs of distress in students and implement appropriate interventions. This proactive approach can significantly improve student well-being, reduce behavioral issues, and enhance the overall learning environment.

Teacher consultation is also essential in the context of educational policy and reform. As education systems evolve, teachers are often at the forefront of implementing new curricula, assessment methods, and teaching standards. Consultation enables teachers to stay informed about changes in educational policies and share feedback on their effectiveness. This collaborative process can contribute to the development of policies that are more aligned with the needs of teachers and students (Sakaue, 2023).

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2023) reported that when teachers participate in consultations regarding educational reforms, they bring valuable insights from the classroom, ensuring that policies are practical, feasible, and grounded in real-world teaching experiences. This collaborative approach can lead to more effective policy implementation and improved educational outcomes.

Barriers to Effective Teacher Consultation

Despite its many benefits, teacher consultation is not always fully realized in practice. Several barriers can hinder its effectiveness. One major challenge is time constraints. Teachers often have limited time during their workday, making it difficult to engage in meaningful consultation with colleagues or specialists. The pressures of lesson planning, grading, and administrative duties can leave little room for collaboration (OECD, 2023).

Similarly, Oranga et al. (2022) observed that another barrier is the lack of structured support for consultation. In some schools, there may not be formal mechanisms or dedicated time for teacher consultation, limiting opportunities for collaboration. In such cases, informal consultation may occur, but it may not be as systematic or focused as needed to address specific challenges.

Strategies for Enhancing Teacher Consultation

To overcome these barriers, schools and educational systems can implement strategies that promote teacher consultation. One approach is to build a culture of collaboration within schools, where consultation is viewed as a vital part of professional development. This can be supported by providing teachers with regular opportunities for collaborative planning, professional learning communities, or mentorship programs. Smith and Johnson (2022) adduced that school leaders can create structured time during the school day for teachers to meet and discuss instructional

strategies, student progress, and challenges. This could include designated planning periods or collaborative workshops that facilitate consultation with colleagues or experts.

Suffice it to state that Teacher consultation is an indispensable element of effective teaching and professional development. Through collaboration with colleagues, specialists, and experts, teachers can improve their instructional practices, better support their students, and stay informed about educational reforms. While challenges such as time constraints and lack of structured support may hinder its effectiveness, schools can overcome these barriers by fostering a culture of collaboration and providing dedicated time and resources for consultation. By prioritizing teacher consultation, educational systems can create a more supportive and dynamic environment that benefits both teachers and students (Darling-Hammond et al., 2023).

Note Taking

Note taking as a study habit refers to the practice of writing down key information, ideas, and concepts while learning, reading, or listening to new material. It involves actively processing and summarizing information in your own words, and reviewing and reflecting on your notes to reinforce learning and retention (Muazzam, 2017). Brock (2023) opined that note-taking is a critical cognitive skill that plays a central role in academic learning, information retention, and the processing of content. With the advent of technology and digital tools, note-taking methods and their effectiveness have evolved, leading to new insights into how students and professionals engage with information. Kiewra et al. (2022) argued that effective note-taking is not merely about recording information but involves organizing, paraphrasing, and summarizing. When students engage in these higher-level cognitive processes, they are more likely to develop a deeper understanding of the material. This underscores the importance of teaching students strategies to improve their note-taking beyond simply transcribing what is heard or read.

Methods of Note Taking

There are several popular note-taking methods, each with its unique strengths. These methods include the Cornell Method, the Outline Method, and Mind Mapping. Each has been evaluated for its effectiveness in helping students retain and recall information.

The Cornell Method, developed by Walter Pauk, involves dividing the note page into three sections: a cue column, a note-taking area, and a summary section. Brock (2023) found that students using the Cornell Method were able to better organize information and recall key points during exams compared to those who used other methods. The structured approach of the Cornell Method encourages active review and revision, which is essential for long-term retention.

Another commonly used method is the Outline Method, which organizes notes hierarchically, using bullet points and subpoints to break down information. While less structured than the Cornell Method, it is favored for its flexibility. McKinney et al. (2023) observed that students who used the Outline Method tended to perform better in subjects that required understanding relationships between concepts, such as history and biology. However, the effectiveness of this method often depends on the individual's ability to organize information logically and efficiently.

However, studies by Kang et al. (2023) suggest that the use of laptops or tablets for note-taking may encourage verbatim transcription rather than active processing of the information. This is due to the speed at which students can type compared to writing by hand. The tendency to transcribe lectures or readings word-for-word without processing the content can undermine understanding and retention, leading to poorer academic performance compared to handwritten notes. Yang and Li (2023) found that students', who use tablets or laptops for note-taking, while incorporating strategies such as summarization and self-testing, show improvements in retention and understanding. Thus, it appears that the effectiveness of digital note-taking depends on how students use the tools and whether they engage in active learning techniques.

Note-Taking and Learning Strategies

Tran et al. (2024) pointed out that effective note-taking is often linked to other learning strategies, such as retrieval practice, spaced repetition, and self-testing. It is worthy of note that students who took notes and regularly reviewed them through self-testing or spaced repetition performed better on exams. For example, when students review and revise their notes, they engage in self-reflection about what they understand and what they need to study further. This process, known as metacognitive monitoring, is essential for effective learning. Sarrasin and Forster (2022) found that students who use their notes for active review and reflection are better at identifying gaps in their knowledge, leading to more efficient study habits.

Fisher and Thompson (2022) adduced that note-taking remains a crucial skill in academic settings, but its effectiveness depends on various factors, including the method used, the medium of note-taking, and the student's engagement in active learning strategies. Handwritten notes are generally more effective for deep learning and retention due to the cognitive processing involved in writing. However, digital tools can be advantageous when used appropriately, especially when they are combined with active learning techniques like summarization and self-testing.

Theoretical Foundations

This study was grounded in an integrated foundation drawing on Social Constructivist Theory, Self-regulated Learning Theory and Information Processing Theory to explain how study habits correlate scholastic adjustment among public secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria. Social Constructivist Theory, advanced by Lev Vygotsky, emphasizes learning through interaction, with the Zone of Proximal Development highlighting the supportive roles of peers and teachers (Vygotsky, 1978); thus, group study and teacher consultation facilitate shared understanding and academic adaptation. Self-regulated Learning Theory by Barry Zimmerman explains how learners actively manage their cognition and behaviour through strategies such as note-taking and help-seeking, which enhance task engagement and adjustment (Zimmerman, 2000). Complementing these perspectives, Information Processing Theory by Richard Atkinson and Richard Shiffrin conceptualizes learning as the encoding, storage, and collaborative discussion strengthen retention and comprehension (Atkinson & Shiffrin, 1968). Collectively, these perspectives provide a coherent and multi-dimensional explanation of how interactive, self-regulated, cognitive study practices contribute to improved scholastic adjustment.

Empirical Evidence

Recent empirical studies provide evidence supporting the relationship between study habits and academic outcomes. Namusoke and Rukundo (2022), emphasizes that peer interaction and cooperative learning can positively influence academic performance, provided that group structure, ability composition, and instructional organization are carefully managed. These insights offer important implications for designing effective collaborative learning environments in both secondary and primary education settings.

Salame et al. (2024) observed effective note-taking as improving comprehension, organization of ideas, and memory retrieval. The evidence suggests that the quality and method of note-taking play a critical role in enhancing learning outcomes and support students' scholastic adjustment.

Cappella et al. (2017) demonstrated that teacher consultation and coaching (BRIDGE model) in urban elementary schools improved classroom practices through collaborative teacher-consultant relationships. Findings indicated that supportive consultation processes, contextual responsiveness, and consistent engagement facilitated effective implementation. The study underscores that teacher consultation promotes instructional improvement and adaptive classroom environment thereby strengthening students' academic engagement and adjustment outcomes.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The study was conducted using the correlational research method. As the name implies, correlational research method is concerned with the relationship or association between two or more variables of interest. Ogidi (2018) espoused that correlational research is a type of non-experimental research method used to examine whether, and to what extent research variables are related.

Area of the Study: The study was conducted in Rivers State, Nigeria, comprising 23 Local Government Areas distributed across three senatorial districts. The State has a large population of public senior secondary school students, providing a suitable context for the investigation.

Population of the Study: 948,406 public Senior Secondary School Three (SS3) students in Rivers State as at 2024 formed the population of the study. These students were drawn from State-owned secondary schools offering Science, Arts, and Social Science subjects, and represents mostly adolescents preparing for their Senior School Certificate Examinations.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: 495 students were selected using a multistage stratified random sampling technique. First the state was stratified into three senatorial districts. Three Local Government Areas were randomly selected from each district. One public secondary school was selected per LGA and 55 students were randomly sampled from each school.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data was collected using the Study Habits and Scholastic Adjustment Scale (SHSS) structured on a four points rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA= 4 Points), Agree (A= 3 Points), Disagree (D=2 Points) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1 Point). Section A which was designed to elicit information on the bio-data of the respondents, section B was designed to elicit information on study habits and Section C was designed to elicit information on scholastic adjustment.

Validation of the Instrument

Content validity was established by three experts in Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling. The validators ensured that the item statements and sentence format, focus and clarity of the instruments were in line with the research objectives and research questions.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was determined through the test re-test method. The researcher administered copies of the instrument to 30 private secondary school students in Rivers State and after an interval of two weeks re-administered the instrument to the same sample. The initial and

subsequent scores of the sample was coded and correlated using Pearson's product moment correlation statistics which yielded reliability coefficient of .75 for (SH) and .72 for (SAS).

Administration of the Instrument

A letter of introduction was presented to the principals of the selected schools. The researcher, visited the schools, explained the purpose of the study, and administered the questionnaires. Rapport was established with the students, and they were guided on how to respond accurately. The instrument was administered with support from teachers.

Data Analysis

The research questions and hypotheses were answered and tested using Pearson's product moment correlation statistics. The analysis was done with the aid of the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). The choice level of significance was the 0.05 level of significance. R-values ranging from 0.1-0.3 were deemed to indicate low relationships either positive or negative, r-values ranging from 0.4-0.6 were deemed to indicate moderate relationship which could be positive or negative while r-values ranging from 0.7-0.9 were deemed to evince high relationship between the variables under investigation either positive or negative.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the relationship between group study and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between group study and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 1 Relationship between Group Study and Scholastic Adjustment

		Group study	Scholastic adjustment
Group study	Pearson Correlation	1	.453**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	450	450

Scholastic adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.453**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	450	450
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Result revealed that group study has a moderate positive relationship ($r = .453$) with scholastic adjustment. What this means is that group study is associated with a moderate increase in scholastic adjustment among the public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between teacher consultation and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between teacher consultation and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 1 Relationship between Teacher Consultation and Scholastic Adjustment

		Teacher consultation	Scholastic adjustment
Teacher consultation	Pearson Correlation	1	.712**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	450	450
Scholastic adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.712**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	450	450

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

The result revealed that teacher consultation has a high positive relationship ($r = .712$) with scholastic adjustment. What this means is that teacher consultation is associated with a high

increase in scholastic adjustment among the public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Hypothesis was rejected.

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between note taking and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between note-taking and scholastic adjustment among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

Table 3Relationship between Note Taking and Scholastic Adjustment

		Note taking	Scholastic adjustment
Note taking	Pearson Correlation	1	.801**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.002
	N	450	450
Scholastic adjustment	Pearson Correlation	.801**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	
	N	450	450

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

The showed that note taking has a high positive relationship ($r = .801$) with scholastic adjustment. What this means is that note taking is associated with a high increase in scholastic adjustment among the public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Hypothesis was rejected. The implication is that note taking significantly relates to scholastic adjustment among the public senior secondary school students in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

Findings indicate that study habits significantly relates with scholastic adjustment.

Group Study

The moderate positive relationship aligns with cooperative learning literature. Studies such as Sylvanus (2022) and Anolu et al. (2025) confirm that collaborative learning enhances engagement, self-regulation and academic adaptation. Structured peer interaction promotes deeper understanding, active engagement, shared responsibility, and self-regulation. These factors collectively improve students' ability to cope with academic demands and adapt effectively to the school environment.

Teacher Consultation

The high relationship suggests that regular academic guidance enhances students' adjustment. The result concatenates the findings of Cappella et al. (2017) which revealed that aspects of the BRIDGE intervention model, school organization and classroom contexts, and teachers/consultants and their relationship were relevant as implementation facilitators or barriers. In addition, case study analysis of intervention materials and fidelity tools from classrooms with moderate-to-high dosage and adherence suggest variation in consultation and coaching by initial level of observed classroom need. Results illuminate the need for implementation of research to extend beyond simple indicators of fidelity to the multiple systems and variation in processes at play across levels of the implementation context.

Note Taking

The strongest relationship was observed for note-taking. This supports cognitive research including Weinstein et al. (2018), which highlights active learning and information processing as key to retention and academic success. Note taking therefore suffice as a good study habit given that it fosters the documentation of vital information for easy recollection or revision after classes. Also, it gives credence to the findings of Salame et al. (2024) which revealed that student's ability to employ note-taking and their method of note-taking is positively correlated with their GPA and performance.

CONCLUSION

Study habits significantly correlate with scholastic adjustment among public secondary school students in Rivers State. Effective engagement in group study, teacher consultation, and note-taking enhances students' academic, social and emotional adaptation.

Recommendations

1. Secondary schools in Rivers State should formally incorporate group study sessions into their academic support programs.

2. Teachers should receive professional development on managing and structuring cooperative learning effectively.
3. Students should be educated on best practices for group study to minimize distractions and maximize academic benefits.
4. Parents should encourage academically oriented peer interactions at home and within communities.
5. Teachers should create regular consultation opportunities.
6. Students should be trained in effective note-taking strategies.
7. Guidance counsellors should integrate study skills training into counselling programs.
8. Public secondary school students in Rivers State should maintain the habit of consulting their teachers from time to time as it fosters their scholastic adjustment.
9. The public secondary school students in Rivers State should continue to take note during lessons as it helps them in no small way to adjust scholastically

Counselling Implications

There is the need for guidance counsellors to develop workshops on self-regulated learning.

School counselors should promote peer collaborative learning strategies.

School counselors should support students in developing structured academic routines.

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