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**STUDY HABIT AS A PREDICTOR OF ACADEMIC MOTIVATION AMONG
SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SOUTHWEST NIGERIA**

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Abstract

Academic motivation is vital for students' learning and achievement. However, many senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria exhibit low motivation, affecting their engagement and academic performance. This study investigated the predictive influence of study habits on academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in the region. A descriptive research design was adopted, involving 1,187 SS2 students selected through a multi-stage sampling procedure, with the final stage being simple random sampling. Data were collected using an adapted four-point Likert-scale instrument titled *Secondary School Students Academic Motivation Questionnaire (SSAMQ)* ($\alpha = 0.985$). Findings revealed a high level of academic motivation ($\bar{x} = 3.10$), with "study planning" as the most commonly adopted habit. However, study habit negatively influenced academic motivation ($\beta = -0.116, p < 0.05$). The study highlights the need for student support systems that promote not just structured study routines but also autonomy, relevance, and interest in learning.

Keywords: Academic Motivation, active engagement, goal orientation, self-determination, study habit, Senior Secondary School Students, Southwest Nigeria.

Introduction

The importance of motivation in the learning process is paramount, as it significantly influences students' academic achievement and personal growth. However, issue of low motivation among students has become increasingly concerning, leading to a range of challenges. For instance, according to Shkëmbi and Treska (2023), students with low motivation often struggle with their academic performance, they might find it hard to keep up with schoolwork, resulting in lower grades and, in some cases, the need to repeat a class. This cycle of underachievement can be discouraging, making it even harder for these students to find the motivation to try harder, which can eventually lead them to drop out of school. Rone, Guao, Jariol, Acedillo, Balinton and Francisco (2023) also revealed that students who consistently struggle in school maybe as a result of poor motivation. These students might start to believe that they are not capable of success in academic or professional fields, which can diminish their willingness to pursue further learning or take on new challenges. This mindset can limit their personal growth and development, as they may avoid situations where they could fail, further narrowing their opportunities. Given the profound impact of motivation on students' lives, addressing academic motivation is a critical issue that needs to be discussed among educational stakeholders.

Academic motivation denotes the impetus or aspiration students possess to participate in and persevere with their educational endeavours and objectives (Muhammad, Siddique, Jabeen & Akhtar, 2023). It encompasses the reasons why students choose to participate in learning activities, how they sustain their effort, and their commitment to achieving academic success (Muhammad et al., 2023). Berestova, Kolosov, Tsvetkova and Grib (2022), indicated that academic motivation is crucial for enhancing student learning since it is closely linked with learning processes. Without the drive that comes from motivation, it becomes difficult for students, to achieve success, both academically and in other areas of life (Berestova et al., 2022). Thus, Elbyaly and Elfeky (2023) described academic motivation as an internal force that propels students to confront and overcome challenges in their educational journey. This study will discuss goal orientation, self-determination and active engagement as measures of academic motivation.

According to Aarkrog and Wahlgren (2022) goal orientation refers to an individual's tendency to develop and pursue goals within a learning context. It essentially captures the reasons behind why students engage in academic tasks. On the other hand, Peterson, Aljadeff-Abergel, Eldridge, VanderWeele and Acker (2021), described self-determination as individual's ability to act autonomously and make choices based on their own values and interests. It encompasses the internal motivation and drive that leads individuals to pursue their goals and engage in activities that are meaningful to them. When applied to the context of academic motivation, self-determination becomes an important indicator of a student's willingness and desire to actively participate in their educational journey. Furthermore, active engagement refers to the degree of involvement, participation, and effort demonstrated by students in their learning process (Mukama & Byukusenge, 2023). It is an essential aspect of effective learning and can be seen as a measure of a student's academic motivation. When students actively engage in their studies, they demonstrate a genuine interest in learning, are more likely to retain information, and are better equipped to apply knowledge in real-world contexts.

Several factors have deduced to be responsible for the low motivation among students in Nigeria. These factors include poor learning facilities, poor quality of teachers, health issues, peer influence, poor parental involvement, poor study habit, among others (Mulang, 2021; Al-Said, 2023; Yue, Men, & Ferguson, 2021). Nevertheless, this study focuses on study habit. While numerous studies on senior secondary students' academic motivation exist, there seem to be a dearth in literature, most especially in the states specified in this study on the influence of study habit on senior secondary students' academic motivation. To fill this gap, this study will focus on study habit as the independent variable.

Study habits play a crucial role in shaping the academic motivation of secondary school students in Nigeria. Developing effective study habits and employing proper time management strategies can greatly impact a student's academic performance and overall motivation to succeed (Asri & Kadafi, 2024). However, the effectiveness of these practices can vary depending on various factors such as individual differences, cultural influences, and educational resources available. Study habits encompass the routines, techniques,

and strategies that students utilise to engage with and process academic material (Kapur, 2018). Effective study habits involve active learning, such as reading and summarising, taking notes, practicing, problem-solving, and reviewing material consistently. By adopting effective study habits, students can enhance their understanding and retention of the subject matter, leading to improved academic performance and increased motivation. Thus, study plan, time management, self-testing and group work will serve as measures of study habit in this study.

A study plan is a structured schedule that outlines specific goals and activities for studying (Judel, Roepke, Azendorf & Schroeder, 2023). It helps students allocate their time effectively, prioritize tasks, and set realistic targets. A well-designed study plan ensures that students cover the required topics adequately, reducing stress and last-minute cramming. Time management on the other hand is an important factor that should be considered by students to attain academic success. In this study, time management involves allocating appropriate amounts of time to various activities, including studying, attending classes, completing assignments, engaging in extracurricular activities, and maintaining a healthy academic lifestyle. Moreover, self-testing is a study technique where individuals evaluate their own knowledge and understanding by actively recalling and answering questions related to the material they are learning. This method involves checking one's grasp of the content without referring to notes or other resources, which helps to reinforce what has been learnt and identify areas that need further review. Lastly, group work involves students collaborating to accomplish a shared goal or complete a task. The process begins with forming groups, which can be organised by the teacher or chosen by the students themselves, depending on the assignment. Each group is given a specific task or project, such as solving a problem, preparing a presentation, or conducting research. This study therefore seeks to investigate study habit as predictor of academic motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of inadequate academic motivation among secondary school students has significant consequences for parents, teachers, examination authorities, educational administrators, and the students

themselves. Despite the efforts of various stakeholders, many senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria are not achieving satisfactory outcomes. This trend is apparent in the outcomes of external assessments such as the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). For instance, in 2021 and 2022, no state from the Southwest region ranked in the top ten in WAEC, and only Lagos state managed to do so in 2023. This lack of motivation led to wasted resources and significant disappointment for parents, who may experience feelings of shame and regret. The resulting emotional and psychological impact on students includes feelings of inadequacy, low self-concept, and the development of an inferiority complex, potentially leading to behaviours such as examination malpractices, cultism, isolation, and aggression. The low number of secondary school students gaining admission to their preferred university courses is a cause for concern. One of the contributing factors includes poor study habits which was investigated in this research. To date, few studies have examined study habits as predictor of academic motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria. This study aims to fill this gap by investigating how study habits predict academic motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the influence of study habits on academic motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to:

- i. identify the extent of academic motivation (goal orientation, self-determination and active engagement) among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria.
- ii. identify the most adopted study habit (study plan, time management, self-testing and group work) among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria?
- iii. determine the significant influence of study habit on academic motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the extent of academic motivation (goal orientation, self-determination and active engagement) among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria?
2. What is the most adopted study habit (study plan, time management, self-testing and group work) among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria?

Hypothesis

H₀1: There will be no significant influence of study habit on academic motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria.

Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was chosen for the study. This design involves collecting data from a representative sample of a population to generate results that can be generalized to the entire population (Bafarasat, Oliveira & Growe, 2023). It is deemed suitable for this study, as it focuses on gathering data for the purpose of description and interpretation without manipulating any variables. Also, the population of the study comprised of all students in public senior secondary schools across Southwest Nigeria. At the time of the study, there were a total of 2,262 public secondary schools in the six states of Southwestern Nigeria, with a student population of 208,804 senior secondary students.

A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed for the study, using different sampling techniques at each stage. In the first stage, Southwest Nigeria was divided into three groups based on proximity and shared characteristics: Ogun and Lagos states formed one group, Ondo and Ekiti made up the second group, and Oyo and Osun comprised the third group. Next, a simple random sampling technique was used to select one state from each group, leading to the selection of Ogun, Ondo, and Oyo states. Each of these selected states consists of three senatorial districts. In the second stage, schools that have been in existence for at least forty years and have a minimum of 100 students in their SS2 classes was chosen from each senatorial district. The rationale behind this selection criterion is that the researcher assumes that such schools with a long-standing presence are likely to have

developed strong educational practices and a deep understanding of the evolving needs of their students. Additionally, by focusing on schools with a substantial student body, the selection aims to capture a diverse and representative sample of institutions that are likely to have well-developed educational frameworks and a broad range of student experiences. In the third stage, the sample size for each of the selected schools was determined using the Taro Yamane Formula ($n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$), where 'n' denotes the sample size, 'N' represents the population under study, and 'e' indicates the margin of error (0.05). Following this, a simple random sampling technique was applied to select students from each sampled school, resulting to 599 public secondary schools and 1,187 SS2 students for the study.

An adapted four-point likert scale instrument, titled the "Secondary School Students Academic Motivation Questionnaire (SSAMQ)," was employed to collect data for the study. Also, a total of 1,187 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to SS2 students in the field. Of these, 1,052 copies were successfully retrieved, representing 88.6% of the total distributed. From the retrieved questionnaires, 952 were deemed valid for analysis, making up 80.2% of the total questionnaires distributed.

The data obtained from the field were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, simple percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to answer the research questions. For the inferential analysis, simple regression was employed to test the hypothesis.

Results

Research Question one: What is the extent of academic motivation (goal orientation, self-determination and active engagement) among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 1: Academic Motivation among Senior Secondary School Students in Southwest Nigeria

Items	VHE Freq (%)	HE Freq (%)	LE Freq (%)	VLE Freq (%)	Weighted Mean
Goal Orientation	477 (50.1%)	244 (25.6%)	98 (10.3%)	133 (14.0%)	3.12
Self- Determination	393 (41.3%)	306 (32.1%)	135 (14.2%)	118 (12.4%)	3.02
Active Engagement	491 (51.5%)	245 (25.7%)	81 (8.5%)	135 (14.3%)	3.15

Overall Weighted Mean= 3.1

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

KEY: VHE= Very High Extent (4), HE= High Extent (3), LE= Low Extent (2), and VLE= Very Low Extent (1)

Decision Rule: Mean value of 0.00 - 1.49 = Very Low Extent; 1.50 - 2.49 = Low Extent; 2.50 - 3.49 = High Extent; 3.50 - 4.00 = Very High Extent

Threshold Mean: 2.50

Table 1 revealed that senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria exhibited a high level of academic motivation across three areas: Goal Orientation (M = 3.12), Self-Determination (M = 3.02), and Active Engagement (M = 3.15). The overall weighted mean of 3.10 indicated that most students were positively driven towards academic success through clear goals, self-motivation, and active involvement in learning.

Research Question Two: What is the most adopted study habit (study plan, time management, self-testing and group work) among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 2: Most Adopted Study Habit among Senior Secondary School Students in Southwest Nigeria

Items	SA Freq (%)	A Freq (%)	D Freq (%)	SD Freq (%)	Rank
Study Plan	420 (44.1%)	240 (25.2%)	135 (14.2%)	157 (16.5%)	1 st
Time Management	383 (40.2%)	204 (21.5%)	210 (22.1%)	155 (16.2%)	2 nd
Self-Testing	177 (18.6%)	109 (11.4%)	383 (40.2%)	283 (29.8%)	4 th
Group Work	200 (21.0%)	101 (10.6%)	411 (43.2%)	240 (25.2%)	3 rd

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

KEY: SA= Strongly Agree (4), A= Agree (3), D= Disagree (2), SD= Strongly Disagree (1), and SD = Standard Deviation

Threshold Mean: 2.50

Table 2 revealed that Study Plan was the most adopted study habit, with 44.1% of students strongly agreeing, ranking it 1st. Time Management followed in 2nd place, supported by 40.2% of students. Group Work was less favored, ranking 3rd, as only (21.0%) strongly agreed with its use. Self-Testing was the least adopted, with only 18.6% of students strongly agreeing to its use. In summary, students preferred study planning and time management over group work or self-testing methods.

Test of Hypothesis

H₀1: There will be no significant influence of study habit on academic motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria.

Table 3: Summary of Regression Analysis showing the Influence of Study Habit on Academic Motivation among Senior Secondary School Students in Southwest Nigeria
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-.501	.147		-3.416	.001
Study Habit	-.130	.012	-.116	-10.979	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Motivation

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 showed that study habit had a significant negative influence on academic motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria ($\beta = -0.116$, $t = -10.979$). The unstandardized coefficient ($B = -0.130$) indicated that for every one-unit increase in study habit score, academic motivation decreased slightly by 0.130 units. This relationship was statistically significant ($p = .000$).

Discussion of Findings

Research question one sought to determine the extent of academic motivation specifically. Goal orientation, self-determination, and active engagement among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria. The findings indicated that students exhibited a high level of academic motivation across all three dimensions. They demonstrated a strong focus on academic goals, a sense of self-determination in their educational pursuits, and active participation in their studies. Several studies support these results. For example, Erhuvwu and Adeyemi (2019) carried out a study in Edo State and found that academic motivation was a significant predictor of academic performance among students in Edo State, particularly in mathematics, emphasising the strong link between goal orientation and academic success. Similarly, Ekene, Nne and Elizabeth (2023) demonstrated that self-regulated learning strategies and goal orientation are significant predictors of academic achievement among secondary school students in Anambra State, highlighting the importance of motivation in achieving positive academic results.

However, not all the researches carried out on academic motivation align with the findings of this study. For instance, Jennifer and Nwankwo (2023) found a weak correlation between academic motivation and achievement in English among senior secondary school students in Imo State, suggesting that motivation alone may not always lead to better academic outcomes.

Research question two aimed at determining the most adopted study habit (study plan, time management, self-testing and group work) among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria. It was discovered that study plans are the most widely adopted, followed by time management which ranks second in terms of adoption, group work is the third most commonly adopted habit, while self-testing is the least adopted habit. Supporting studies offer insights into these findings. Chata, Kangumu and Abah (2023) observed that Namibian students also rely heavily on personal study timetables and exhibit minimal engagement in peer study groups and self-testing, a pattern mirrored in Nigeria. Similarly, Sesento and Lucio (2021) noted that students often lack consistent study habits, which correlates with the lesser emphasis on self-testing and group work in favour of structured study plans. Contradicting studies provide an alternative perspective. For example, Ogunode (2019) found that while study plans are prevalent, students in Abuja displayed a greater inclination towards group work, differing from the trend in Southwest Nigeria. Also, Akunna, Okesina, Ajiboye, and Monisola (2022) reported that self-testing strategies were effective in alleviating exam anxiety, suggesting higher adoption in Kwara State.

Hypothesis was tested to determine the influence of study habit on academic motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria. The result revealed that study habits have a negative influence on academic motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria. Aligning with this finding, Omi-Ujuanbi (2024) found that mood disorders among students are inversely related to academic motivation. This suggests that emotional or psychological challenges potentially worsened by intensive study demands; may lead to reduced academic drive. On the other hand, several studies contradict this conclusion. Emike (2022) reported that study habits when supported by guidance counselors positively influenced students' motivation.

Conclusion

This study was set out to investigate the influence of study habit on student motivation among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria. The findings showed that senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria exhibited a high level of academic motivation, particularly in active engagement, goal orientation and self-determination. The most adopted study habit was the use of study plans, followed by time management, while group work and self-testing were less common. However, study habits were found to have a significant negative influence on academic motivation. While some studies support this, others highlight the positive role of guided study habits in boosting motivation. In conclusion, the findings highlight the need for proper academic support and guidance to ensure that students' study habits positively contribute to their motivation and academic success.

Recommendations

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

1. Schools and educational policymakers should build on this high level of academic motivation by integrating programmes that further nurture and sustain students' motivation.
2. Given that study plans and time management were the most adopted study habits among senior secondary school students in Southwest Nigeria, teachers should reinforce these habits while also promoting the less adopted habits, such as self-testing and group work.
3. Policymakers, parents and teachers should ensure that study habit interventions are not just focused on structure and routine but also on promoting autonomy, relevance, and interest in learning. Schools should also provide regular academic counseling and mentorship programmes to help students develop effective and balanced study habits that enhance; rather than diminish their academic motivation.

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