

STUDY HABIT AND ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT AS CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC STRESS AMONG STUDENTS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated Study Habit and Academic Adjustment as correlates of Academic stress among students of tertiary institutions in Taraba State, Nigeria. This research work adopted a correlational research design. The population for this study was 44,546 students of public tertiary institutions out of which three hundred and ninety four (394) were selected through stratified proportionate random sampling and participated in the study. The instruments for data collection were structured questionnaires titled Study Habit and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (SHAAQ) and Academic Stress Questionnaire (ASQ). The instruments (SHAAQ and ASQ) were subjected to face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha which yielded 0.78 and 0.74 reliability index respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test the hypotheses. Findings from the study show that there was significant relationship between Study Habit and Academic Stress among students of tertiary Institution in Taraba State, the relationship between Academic Adjustment and Academic Stress among students of tertiary Institution in Taraba State was also significant; It was recommended among others, that students should be encouraged to establish consistent study routines, break down tasks into smaller, manageable steps, and seek help when needed.

Keywords: Study Habit, Academic Adjustment, Academic stress,

INTRODUCTION

Education as `always been, and will continue to be, an evolutionary and ever expanding entity in human history. Each country formulates its own system of education to reflect and promote its culture and common social tradition and to cope up with the challenges of the contemporary period. Humans are a valuable natural resource. In short, we have to regard education as singular investment for now and for future too (Dhanalakshmi & Murty 2018).

The approach taken to learn academic material and prepare for assessments is called study habits. Study habits of a student denotes his/her ability to plan, schedule, take notes, and study the materials (Ibrahim, 2023). Each student needs to deal with multiple academic tasks like taking examinations, completing graded assignments, competing with fellow students, and understanding the material taught by the instructor (Ayisha et al., 2021). Study habits have a direct interdependence with the academic life of the students. Poor study habits negatively affect the academic performance of even gifted students and that is an unfortunate reality. According to Jato (2014) and Crede and Kunciel (2015) studies, lack of effective study techniques is among the leading reasons why students do not perform as expected academically. Strong study habits directly contribute to better grades and academic achievement. This boosts self-esteem and confidence, facilitating smoother academic adjustment.

Academic adjustment involves a student's ability to adapt to the demands of higher education, including coursework, social interactions, and personal responsibilities. Almost every new student in a university setting goes through an adjustment period at his or her unique speed of growth. According to Asghar et al. (2018), that during the transition period from secondary school to higher institutions, students may face many challenges including new environment, teachers, friends, lifestyle and changed academic setup. Processes around managing these challenges are broadly referred to as academic adjustment. There are many things that influence the adjustment of the adolescent like environment, situation, age, socio economic status, among others. Students need to learn to balance with the situation and to the choices of their responsibilities, they also require adaptive behaviours in areas such as time management, effective study skills, the capacity to complete courses and the ability to see transition as a normative shift and not a crisis.

Poor academic adjustment is one of the most common problems affecting students in the higher institution of learning. Students who are affected by poor adjustment may have a greater probability of absconding lectures, lateness to class, absenteeism, examinational malpractice, unnecessary complaints, low academic grades and withdrawal from the system. This however could result in negative effects not only to the student but also to the society. It is very important that students have an awareness about factors that can trigger poor academic adjustment and the consequences that it can bring into their lives such as stress.

Academic stress has become a serious issue among educational institutions and policymakers because of the increasing incidence of suicides among students across the globe (Ayisha et al, 2021). A number of students committed suicides because they were depressed about failing their exams and many unreported attempts of suicides is likely to be much higher (Opurum, J. 2019) due to academic stress. Stress in academic institutions can have both positive and negative consequences if not well managed. However, it is important to the society that students should learn and obtain the essential knowledge and skills to study hard and be guided with their adjustment academically as students in higher institutions suffer from different kind of academic stressors during their education experiences.

Statement of the problem

Colleges, polytechnics and universities are social institutions where learning takes place. Most students entering tertiary institutions often face significant academic and social adjustment challenges, particularly during the transition from high school to tertiary institutions. Transition into the tertiary institutions may come with a lot of anxiety, stress, frustration, and expectations from lecturers, interaction with new colleagues in pursuance of knowledge and many others that create excessive pressure which may in turn have effect on academic adjustment of students. The researcher through an interaction with the students during the practicum field experiences in one of the tertiary institutions in Taraba State observed during the placement exercise that university students are at a high risk for increased stress. students have laid so much complaints of too much academic demands and expectations, limited time allocation problems, worries about future, career, financial problems, issues of school fees, poor school environment, and many more. Moreover, tertiary institution students in different schools and levels have peculiar academic problems and task that can create conditions for stress which may affect the students' academic adjustment. It is for this reason that this research was conducted to find out whether Study Habit and Academic Adjustment have any relationship with Academic Stress among Students of tertiary Institution in Taraba State Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

Generally, the purpose of the study is to examine Study Habit and Academic Adjustment as correlates of Academic Stress of Students of tertiary Institution in Taraba State, Nigeria. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to find out.

- i. The relationship between Study Habit and Academic Stress among Students of tertiary institutions in Taraba State.
- ii. The relationship between Academic Adjustment and Academic Stress among Students of tertiary institutions in Taraba State.

Hypotheses

H0₁. There is no significant relationship between Study Habit and Academic Stress among Students of tertiary Institution in Taraba State.

H0₂. There is no significant relationship between Academic Adjustment and Academic Stress among Students of tertiary Institution in Taraba State..

Methodology

This research work adopted a correlation research design. The population for this study was 44,546 students of public secondary school out of which three hundred and ninety four (394) were selected through stratified proportionate and random sampling participated in the study. The instruments for data collection were a structured questionnaires titled Study Habit and Academic Adjustment Questionnaire (SHAAQ) and Academic Stress Questionnaire (ASQ). The instruments (SHAAQ and ASQ) were subjected to face and content validity by three experts from the Faculty Education, Taraba State University, Jalingo. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach alpha which yielded 0.78 and 0.74 reliability index respectively. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), was used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS

Null Hypotheses

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between Study Habit and Academic Stress among students of tertiary institutions in Taraba State.

Table 1: Correlation between Study Habit and Academic Stress among students of tertiary institutions in Taraba State

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	R	P
Study Habit	394	3.36	0.447	0.449**	0.000
Academic Stress	394	2.91	0.548		

Table 1 shows the result for Pearson product moment correlation between Study Habit and Academic Stress among students in tertiary Institution in Taraba State. The correlation Table indicated that there is significant relationship between study habit and academic stress at 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$) with a medium correlation ($r = 0.449$). Therefore, hypothesis one which states that there was no significant relationship between Study Habit and Academic Stress among students in tertiary Institution in Taraba State is therefore rejected.

Hypothesis two: There is no significant relationship between Academic Adjustment and Academic Stress among students of tertiary Institution in Taraba State.

Table 2: Correlation between Academic Adjustment and Academic Stress among students of tertiary institutions in Taraba State

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	R	P
Academic Adjustment	394	3.19	0.491	0.137**	0.006
Academic Stress	394	2.91	0.548		

Table 2 shows the result for Pearson product moment correlation between Academic Adjustment and Academic Stress among students in tertiary Institution in Taraba State. The correlation Table indicated that there is no significant relationship between academic adjustment and academic stress at 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$) with a low correlation ($r = 0.137$). Therefore, hypothesis two which states that there was no significant relationship between Academic Adjustment and Academic Stress among students in tertiary Institution in Taraba State is therefore upheld.

Discussion of Findings

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), was conducted to examine Study Habit and Academic Adjustment as correlates of Academic stress among students of tertiary institutions in Taraba State, Nigeria. The findings of this study revealed that there is significant relationship between Study Habit and Academic Stress at 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$) with a positive medium correlation ($r = 0.449$). This finding agrees with the studies of Mahvish et al. (2021); Ernest-Ehibudu and Oporum (2019); Casali-Turpo et al. (2024) who all affirmed that there is a significant and positive relationship between Academic Stress and Study habit. The findings of this study also indicated that there is significant relationship between academic adjustment and academic stress at 0.05 level of significance ($p < 0.05$) with a low correlation ($r = 0.137$). The finding agrees with the study of Arizal and Permata (2021); Abubakar et al. (2021); Nilanchala and Sujata (2023) which revealed that there was significant relationship found between Academic Adjustment and Academic Stress.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study it was concluded that there was significant relationship between study habit, and Academic stress among students of Tertiary institutions in Taraba State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

1. Students should be encouraged to establish consistent study routines, break down tasks into smaller, manageable component, and seek help when needed.
2. Students should similarly be encouraged to seek support from lecturers or counsellors when facing academic challenges or stress.
3. Schools management and institutions should enhance counselling services to address students' academic and emotional needs.

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