

Assessment of Poor Learning Strategies and Their Effects on Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Sokoto State

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Abstract: *The aim of the paper is to highlight the factors responsible for poor learning strategy among students and also examined the effects of these factors on student academic performance. Finally, conclusion and recommendations were provided. However, it was recommended that using potential question to guide reading, going over class notes, group discussions and techniques to prepare for examination are all important methods of checking understanding, consolidating knowledge and integrated related information and identifying if additional studying must be done.*

Key words: *Assessment, Learning Strategies, Academic performance, Senior Secondary School, Students.*

I. Introduction

Learning strategy involves specific activities or plans used by the learner to help recall things better or to perform learning task more effectively. It consists of rules and principles used to facilitate learning, which are applicable to a variety of learning situations. It is a process that aims at improving performance of the learner. It is purposeful and

goal oriented in terms of usability and acquisition.

In another development, learning strategy could be describe as a learning technique which present a step by step instructional plan aimed at improving study skills, reading comprehension, note taking, test taking skills, attention, concentration, and virtually all what is needed to improve students' performance.

Seifat (1993) considered learning strategy as a mental event carried out by the learner to achieve a desired goal. He emphasizes the role of thought processes in learning strategy. He maintains that students need to be mentally active if learning is to occur. He notes that when students attend to information and try to understand how new ideas relate to one another they are engaged in strategic learning. Having the above background information on what learning strategy entails, what then are the factors responsible for poor learning strategies among students.

II. Statement of the Problem

The difficulty arising from the learning process is largely as a result of lack of understanding about how learning strategy could be use to address learning problems. The National Policy of Education (revised 1991) stressed the need for competence in both mental and physical abilities as equipment for individual to contribute to the development of his/ her society. To develop mental ability, the students have to master the rudiments of learning fundamentals hence the need for learning strategy.

These difficulties experienced in learning if left unchecked, will increase the rate of students' poor performances at all levels of education. Imorgie (1993) attributes poor performance of students in examination to ineffective learning system. Therefore, for students to perform academically better, they must be proficient in the learning process.

III. Significance of the Study

Learning strategies afford students the opportunity to have specific action plan for learning which enables them to remember and perform learning task better (Seifat,1993). Learning strategy provides internalization of knowledge and creates tendencies that enable students to go at their own pace. It leads to mastery and better performance in a chosen area of specialization. Poor learning strategy causes constraints to learning process which will eventually lead to failure.

IV. Review of related Literature

Magaji (2010) investigates the relationship among Locus of Control, Personality and Academic Achievement of students in Sokoto metropolis. The sample was drawn from a total number of 360 students in seven selected Secondary Schools in Sokoto metropolis. For this study, adopted version of Akimboye sub-scale were used. Six hypotheses were generated and tested in this study. Multiple regression analysis, Pearson Product Moment of Correlations Coefficient were used. Result of the study showed that, there exist significant relationship among locus of control, personality and academic achievement, a significant relationship do exist between personality of students and academic achievement. Among the recommendation of this study, is that teachers and counselors should attempt to handle students individually as students vary in locus of control scale and personality grouping.

Sani (2011) examines relationship between personality characteristics and students' Achievement in Qur'anic memorization in Sultan Muhammadu Maccido Institute for Qur'an and General Studies, Sokoto. The study was motivated by the failure of the students to memorize the Qur'an despite all the necessary provisions and conducive learning environment that was provided in the institute. Adapted version of Junior Eysenck Personality Inventory (JEPI) and JS3 Second Term Qur'anic Recitation Examinations results were two instruments used. Sample of 87 JS3 students drawn from the population of 178 total numbers of JS3 students in the institute were used. A hat and draw random sampling was used in selecting the sample.

Results of the study revealed that, there was no significant relationship between personality characteristics and academic achievement in Qur'anic memorization among the JS3 students of SMMIQGS, Sokoto. Significant sex difference was found in the personality characteristic of JS3 students. No significant gender difference was found in the academic achievement of JS 3 students in Qur'anic memorization. Suggestions for further research were identified and it was recommended among other things that motivation is an integral aspect of teaching and learning, as teachers, we should take into cognizance the personality dimension of our students while motivating them. In addition, there was no significant gender difference in the academic achievement of the students in Qur'anic memorization, thus, we should not be gender biased in encouraging our students.

Michael (2013) examines the dynamic relationship between academic performance of high school students and their respective learning study strategies. Two hundred and thirty-six (236) high students were recruited to participate in this study by completing the Chinese version of the Learning and Study Strategy Inventory-LASSI, to probe into the relationship. Results found that (1) there were clear differences in the learning and study strategies used by high school students with high academic performance, and those with low academic performance;(2) all the three components (will; self regulation and skill) were equally important to differentiate high academic achieving high school students from low academic achieving high school students within the strategic model of learning.; and (3) a number of learning and study strategies were effectively predicting the academic performance of the high school students. All of these results patterns, confirms that learning and study strategies used by high academic achievers and low academic achievers as well as the component used to predict student academic performance in the high school setting are quite different from the patterns reveal in the tertiary education sector.

James, Robert, and David (2006) investigate Personality, achievement test scores, and high school percentile as predictors of academic performance across four years of course work. The research examined the role of the three Big five related personality traits (Prudence, sociability and Ambition) as unique Predictors of Academic performance. Results indicate that, two of the traits prudence and sociability contributed unique variance to GPA which the effect of high school percentile rank and achievement test score were controlled for both classes. There was a decline in incremental validity for these two personality traits as predictors of GPA in student's tenure. Ambition was unrelated to academic performance for both classes.

David and Brenden (2002) examine personality and academic achievement: principles for educators and student to model. Result indicates that correlation analyses demonstrated that academic consciousness, test anxiety and previous achievement accounted for unique and shared variance on test performance. Moreover, the operational definitions of the specific measures used encapsulate the principle that would be useful for educators to inculcate in their teaching methods and for students to pursue in order to optimize performance.

Peter, Joseph and Patrick (2008) examine cognitive ability, personality and academic performance in adolescence. Result suggests that intelligence; gender and positive thinking play a unique role in predicting academic performance in youth.

Kalka and Pullman (2007) investigate personality and intelligence as predictors of academic performance: A cross sectional study from elementary to secondary school. Findings revealed that openness, agreeableness and conscientiousness correlated positively and neuroticism correlated negatively with Grade Point Average (GPA) in almost every grade. Intelligence was still the strongest predictor of GPA being followed by agreeableness in grade 2 to 4 and conscientiousness in grade 6 to 12. Interactions between predictor variables and age accounted for only a small percentage of variance in GPA. This suggests that academic achievement relies basically on the same mechanism throughout the school years.

The following factors were identified as responsible for poor learning strategies among students:

Anxiety; this emphasizes the interactive effects of our own thoughts processes, beliefs, emotions and how they affect learning processes. This is manifested in negative self referent statement. These negative thoughts, belief, and feelings about one's abilities., intelligence, and interaction with others, or likelihood of success, diverts student attention away from the task at hand, such as studying or taking test .This type of self defeatsbehaviour often sabotages a student efforts in studying. If students are tense, anxious or fearful about studying or performing in academic situation, this will divert their attention away from the academic task and inward to self criticism or irrational fears.

Attitudes; The general attitude of student toward school and their general motivation for succeeding in school have a great impact on their diligence when studying particularly, where they have to study on their own. If the relationship between the school and life goals (academic, social and work related goals) are not in conformity with one another, then it will be difficult to maintain a mind-set that will promote good studying/learning and attention to school and its related tasks.

Concentration; Concentration helps students to focus their attention on school related activities such as studying, listening in class, rather than on distracting thoughts, feelings, emotions, or situations. People possess a limited capacity to focus on the test at hand. This means distractions or anything else that interferes with concentration, will divert attention away from school related activities.

Information processing; Learning is enhanced by the use of elaboration and organization strategies. These strategies helps to provide linkages between what students know and what he or she is trying to learn or remember. Using what we already know that is our prior knowledge, experience or belief and reasoning skills to help make meaning out of new information it is important to note that it is not just amount of knowledge one possess, but how is it acquired and organized a student who does not have a repertoire of these strategies and skills will find it difficult to incorporate new knowledge and understanding.

Selecting main idea;Efficient studies required that the student be able to select the important material for in depth attention. A major school task involves separating the important from unimportant or simply didactic information that does not have to be remembered. If a student cannot select the critical information, then the learning task becomes complicated by the huge amount of material the student is trying to acquire, After all the student may not have time to study everything that must be covered.

Self testing strategies; Reviewing and testing the level of understanding are important for knowledge acquisition and comprehension monitoring. These strategies both support and contribute to meaningful learning and effective performance without them learning may be incomplete or errors might persist undetected. Reviewing and self testing also contribute to knowledge consolidation and integration across topics. Similarly, using mental reviews, going over class notes and the text, thinking of potential questions to guide reading or help prepare for an exam are all important methods for checking understanding, consolidating new knowledge, integrating related information and identifying if additional studying must be done.

V. Effects Of Poor Learning Strategies On Students Academic Performance

Anxiety is one of the predictors of academic performance. Students with anxiety display a passive attitude in their studies such as lack of interest in learning, poor performance in exams. Its symptoms includes feeling nervous, panicking, going blank in a test, feeling helpless while doing assignment, fast breathing , racing heartbeat or an upset stomach.

Ruffins (2007) noted that students with high level of anxiety have a reduced memory span, lost concentration and lack confidence and poor reasoning power. He observed that concentration is caused by the following: lack of sleep, poor nutrition, depression, negative feeling about work, distraction, and negative feelings about one self, stress and poor time management.

On focus and concentration, studies have shown that as we get older, focus and concentration can change as memory and other cognitive functions may not perform their functions as before, however, this is not inevitable. In fact, some studies – with older people have shown no decline in decision making capabilities and the capacity for strategic learning – using specific method to understand something – can get even better with age. If you have poor focus, you may feel as if you simply have to try harder but this strategy probably won't help, instead you can have better focus by taking action to promote improvement in the specific brain functions that drive concentration and awareness. By creating conditions that makes it easier to concentrate and complete your work, you can feel sharper and more focused especially when you have a specific task to accomplish. Some of the factors that impair concentration include: Poor diet and nutrition, stress, Hunger, Lack of sleep, Learning Environment etc

Self testing strategies

Selecting main Idea

Information processes

Attitudes

It is important to note that only students who experienced the challenge of having specific learning difficulties understand the complications and difficulties that arise in the learning process. This development had led to incidences of examination malpractice and intellectual dishonesty constituting a major factor plaguing our educational system today. This development is not healthy for any country of the world, as an unprecedented large scale of examination malpractice poses greatest threat to the validity and reliability of certificates issued (Offorma, 1995). To arrest this situation, there is the need for the knowledge of learning strategy which serves as the bases of the learning process. NOT RELATED

The learning strategies covered by this study includes information processing which assesses how well students can use imagery, verbal elaboration and reasoning skills as learning strategies to help learn new information and skills. Selecting main ideas assesses student's skill at identifying information for further study from less important and supporting details. The test strategy assesses students' use of both test preparation and test taking strategies. Anxiety assesses the degree to which students worry about school and their academic performance, while attitudes assesses students' attitudes and interest in achieving academic success. Concentration assesses students' ability to direct and maintain their attention on academic task. Self testing assesses reviewing and comprehension monitoring techniques to determine the level of understanding of the task to be learned.

VI. Objectives of the study

The study is set out to achieve the following objectives

- To identify factors responsible for poor learning strategies
- To investigate the effects of poor learning strategies on students academic performance.

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁ There is no significant difference in the academic performance and Learning strategies of Secondary School students

H₀₂ There is no significant difference in the academic performance and learning strategies of male and female Secondary School students.

VII. Methodology and Research Procedure

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the academic performance and Learning strategies of Secondary School students. The hypothesis was tested using t-test statistical technique. Results was presented in table 1 below:

Variable	N	X	SD	SE	Df	t-value	Sig@0.05	Decision
Acad. perfm.	127	57.58	22.65	1.20	379	2.001	00.16	Rejected
Learn. Stra.	127	56.55	22.01	2.56				

Sig. at p. > 0.05 level

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the academic performance and Learning strategies of males and female Secondary School students. The hypothesis was tested using t-test statistical technique. Results was presented in table 2 below:

Gender	N	X	SD	SE	Df	t-value	Sig@0.05	Decision
Male	254	47.58	45.65	2.60	379	2.31	0.026	Rejected
Female	254	47.20	54.54	6.56				

Sig. at p.> 0.05 level

VIII. Findings

1. Poor learning strategy devoid the learner ability to recall things better or to perform learning task more efficiently
2. Poor learning strategy impedes students' academic performance.
3. Poor learning strategies disable students to use both test preparation and test taking strategies.
4. The use of reasoning skills and verbal elaborations are encouraged.
5. Students' reviewing and comprehension monitoring techniques are strenghtened.

IX. CONCLUSION

1. Good learning strategy minimizes difficulties arising from the learning process.
2. Poor learning strategy does not allow students to understand the strength and weaknesses of the learning process.
3. Poor Learning strategy does not have the potential of focusing students' attention on the motive of learning and studying.

RECOMMENDATIONS;

- 1]. The learned exercise provided by the teacher should be those intended to make students think in a strategic way
- 2]. Students learning strategy should be altered to include teaching them when and how to use strategy to influence student thought

3). the teacher can guide students thinking by setting the learning task in such a way that it promotes the use of imagery create a summary or think of concept map.

4). Modification of student study behaviour; this refers to teaching students the strategies for the improvement of their study and learning. Teachers should re-focused their attention on how they teach and how their students' learn

5). Teachers' approach to instruction should be learners centered. This is characterized by the following factors:

a) A focus on how students learn

b) Explicit instruction on how learning strategies works

c) Elaborate goal setting

d) Student self evaluation

6. Student should re-examine their learning strategies and thought process skills, and how they demonstrate new knowledge on test and other evaluative procedures.

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