

STUDY BEHAVIOUR: A COUNSELLING APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Academic achievement analyses by eminent psychologists have proved beyond doubt, that of all the academic problems besting learners at different levels of our educational system, study problem is the most grandiose, and constitutes the major headache in academic success. This paper has therefore been written to ameliorate students study problem and to increase the probability of success in important examinations. The stress throughout is on what is right, and how to achieve it through strategies for studying, preparing for and passing examinations. Counsellors can identify students' areas of strengths and weakness in relation to the norming sample and their stand on the various study practice areas. The researcher recommended that students should take their studies seriously as their failure and success lies on it. He equally draws the attention of students to the essentials of study behaviour, time management, organisation of study task, etc

INTRODUCTION

The study is fundamental to the acquisition of knowledge. It is simply referred to as the conscious effort of the individual directed to the acquisition of knowledge in any area of human endeavour. This concept of study implies that all persons are involved in one form of study or the other as they attempt to gain knowledge in their interaction with persons and object in their environment. Any conscious effort made to acquire knowledge or gain mastery of things is study. It is a complex skill, which has to be thoroughly learnt for one to attain competence in one's chosen profession.

Unfortunately, students do not usually conceive study as hard work. Most often, study is taken as being synonymous with reading which only a fragment of the concept of study. According to Akinboye (1980), the process of study is psychological affecting the individual's thinking, teaching, personality, social interaction and physical activities. Studying is not just limited to reading or forcing fact into the brain, but includes such diverse activities as attending to academic assignment, practical activities, concentrating, learning, absorbing fact, coding and reorganizing the fact in the thought system so that recall of the retained facts will be achieved when required. Study may therefore be defined as purposeful, goal oriented, multi-modal activity, involving previewing, questioning, reading, reciting and reviewing in an attempt to master a specified task. It involves the application of total behaviour pattern (covert and overt), will power, motivation and enforced practices in order to acquire competence in a given task

Study, when directed to school work, is defined as a chain of systematic behaviour patterns acquired and specifically directed towards the acquisition of knowledge with a view to passing examination and getting better grades. Psychologists agree that studying is "hard work", which require the investment of absolute concentration and attention vigorous energy and persistence, before remarkable success is achieved. The single most importance ambition of any student is to excel in important examinations. Unfortunately the realization of this goal eludes many students. Psychologist in attempt to identify the causal factors realize that many students perform badly in important examinations not because they do not possess the intellectual ability necessary for the accomplishment of academic success but because they do not use the relevant and efficient study techniques.

Studying is a complex phenomenon. In studying any material, three related yet distinguishable stages are accomplished. First, there are the acquisition stages when the material studied is absorbed. Second, there is the retention stage when the material studied is stored in the brain. Third, there is the recall stage, when the material stored is reproduced when required by the individual or during important examinations. The three stages are interrelated to the extent

that what affects the effectiveness of learning at one stage, will obviously affect the effective accomplishment of the other stages. For instance, if a material is poorly studied at the acquisition stage, it will be most likely poorly stored at the retention stage and recall will be impaired

Study is the primary concerns of students the world over. The motivation for students to study stands out of the belief that study is a sine-qua-non to academic success. It is generally assumed that it is only students who give themselves to efficient and systematically planned study that usually triumph over their study programmes. An analysis of why students study isolated the following factors as basic goals which study is intended to accomplish:

- a. To attain better grades.
- b. To pass important examinations
- c. To complete school assignments.
- d. To acquire knowledge about issues, events, objects, etc.
- e. To acquire specific skills
- f. To acquire competence in certain skills

Laudable as these goals are, some students find it difficult to study and a good percentage of those who study do not have a systematic approach and consequently study ineffectively, with devastating results. A good majority of the students in the secondary schools are yet to acquire good study habits that can led to effective learning. The argument is that the fault does not lie primarily with the students but in the inability of our various institutions to recognize the importance of study techniques in the overall success of their students. The major problem of poor academic performance was traced to poor study habits, when Clemens and Delke (1967) found that poor study habits ranked highest when compared with other factors responsible for poor academic performance. Similarly, a research conducted by Azeez (1990) on the factors responsible for poor academic performance among secondary school students showed that poor study habit rank highest, varieties of family problems were ranked second, and non-challenging academic tasks ranked third while apathy in students' education ranked the least.

Various other researchers carried out by a good number of psychologists are consistent with the following results:

- i. The use of effective study skills is related to high academic performance (Weigal & Weigal, 1963)
- ii. Academic higher achievers have more regular study habits, higher record of attendance at lecturers and tutorials than low achievers (Pond, 1964)
- iii. Wise use of good study method leads to success (Miss & Echett, 1934)
- iv. Many failing students could improve their scholarship by improving their study habits (Brown, 1941)

Based on the outcome of these researches, it is no gainsaying therefore that, of all the academic problems

besetting, learners poor study habits would appear to be the most grandiose and constitutes the major headache, which seriously militate against adequate academic performance of students. In view of the above therefore, the acquisition of efficient study behaviour should be understood as significant as the teacher's lessons in the overall academic achievement of students. The acquisition of effective study habit is pertinent for lower achievers as well as for higher achievers. Since no student is perfect, the poor achieving students can significantly be improved by a systematic and consistent application of an effective and efficient study behaviour.

Psychological Assessment of Study Behaviour:

An attempt to improve your study efficiency should start with a measurement of your baseline study performance. This implies that you have to measure the efficiency of your study behaviour before you start making an effort to improve it. The rationale behind this is in the belief that once a student identifies his weaknesses and strengths, he would be in a position to cultivate the strengths into habits and attempt to correct the deficient behaviour. The study behaviour inventory in this paper can serve the following purposes:

- (a) Help in identifying your defective study habits that is bound to affect adversely your academic performance;
- (b) Provide a basis for helping you improve your study habits and your academic performance.

To achieve these objectives, the questions on the study Behaviour Inventory (SBI) cover the following major areas of study practice.

Section 1:

1. Time Allocation
2. Reading and Note-making
3. Listening and Note-taking
4. Homework and Assignment.
5. Concentration.
6. Examinations.
7. Teacher Consultation
8. Study period procedure
9. Test Anxiety.

Students are therefore strongly counselled to pay great attention to these study areas mentioned above.

Description of Students Behaviour Inventory (SBI):

The Study Behaviour Inventory (SBI) is a thirty-six item self-report inventory designed to elicit specific information about the student's study behaviour. The inventory enables the student to describe how he attends to his studies, prepares for examination, reacts to exams and his subsequent performance in important examinations. The inventory is divided into two parts, one taps information on the testees idiographic and demographic variables. Part two contains the 36 items of the inventory. All the 36 items of the inventory are in form of direct question to which the student is required to provide direct answers (Yes or No). The inventory is divided into nine sections; each section represents a unique study skill.

Administration of the Study Behaviour Inventory (SBI):

The first step in the administration of SBI is to ensure that appropriate physical conditions are provided. These include, ensuring that seating, lighting, ventilation, temperature and other physical conditions of the testing venue are

satisfactory. Testees should be properly seated and well spaced so that testees cannot observe each other's answers to specific items. As soon as the testees are comfortable seated the following announcement should be made:

1. This test is unlike your class tests. There are no wrong or right answers. The test is just to know the deficiency in your study behaviour, which can affect your school work so that it can be corrected for you to perform better.
2. Note that the result of the test can only be helpful to you if your responses are as honest as possible. Any response you give must be treated confidentially. In making the announcement, the announcer should use a soft but clear tone. They are equally encourage to complete the personal data section.

About the reliability and validity of the instrument, the Test-retest reliability method was adopted after presenting the draft to some senior lecturers from Cross River University of Technology (CRUTECH) where some corrections and recommendations were made. The instrument was administered twice to the same subjects at different times within some time interval, the scores in both administration gives a measure of the reliability value hence the scores where consistence, while the content validity of the instrument: was adequate as it covers or reflect all the topics of the study.

STUDY BEHAVIOUR INVENTORY (SBI)

PERSONAL DATA

NAME: CLASS: SEX: DATE OF BIRTH:
 SCHOOL:
 TYPE OF SCHOOL: All Boys, All Girls, Co-Educational
 (Circle one)
 SCHOOL LOCATION: Rural. Urban (circle one)

PARENTS	FATHER	MOTHER
Name		
Address		
Level of Education		
Occupation		
Religion		

Home Conditions

Family: Monogamous Polygamous (circle one)
 No. of Children: Boys Girls Total
 Position relative to other children
 Children by own mother: boys Girls

Residence:

- (1) Self contained House
- (2) Self contained flat
- (3) Block of Flats
- (4) Block of rooms
- (5) Traditional compound (circle one)
- (6)

DIRECTIONS

The study Behaviour Inventory (SBI) is the outcome of intensive research. It is designed to help you identify your defective or poor study behaviour, the information you give is to enable you get a feedback on your study efficiency so as to make adequate provision for improvement. Put a tick (√) within the column that best describes your study habits.

NO	SECTION 1 TIME ALLOCATION	YES	NO
1.	Do you stick to the schedule of your timetable?	2	1
2.	Do you study less than two hours a day?	1	2
3.	Do you miss class activities because you feel that you can always cover the missed lesson?	1	2
4.	Do you engage in fun-seeking activities at the expense of your studies?	1	2
TOTAL SCORE			
SECTION 2: READING AND NOTE MAKING			
5.	When you read, do you outline the silent points in the materials studied?	2	1
6.	Do you find it difficult to identify the important points in the materials you read?	1	2
7.	Do you review and recite the outline you made from the material studied?	2	1
8.	Do you make a preliminary survey of your study tasks before reading in details?	2	1
TOTAL SCORE			
SECTION 3: LISTENING AND NOTE TAKING			
9.	When you know the subject to be taught in advance do you preview or review related reading in order to recognise and organize main ideas and technical terms more easily?	2	1
10.	When note-taking seems especially difficult, do you leave blank spaces so that later you can write in clarifying or supplementary information?	2	1
11.	Do you remember to use appropriate abbreviations and symbols during note-taking in the class?	2	1
12.	During listening, do you make notes as well as taking notes?	2	1
TOTAL SCORE			
SECTION 4: HOME WORK AND ASSIGNMENT			
13.	Do you abandon your homework because it is difficult or boring?	1	2
14.	When you miss a class, do you make up the note on the lesson immediately?	2	1
15.	Do you wait and rush your assignment at the last minute?	2	1
16.	Do you leave your home work for someone else to do for you because you think it is difficult or you have no time to do it?	2	1
TOTAL SCORE			
SECTION 5: CONCENTRATION			
17.	Do you concentrate on your work each time you are studying?	2	1
18.	Are you easily distracted by outside noise when studying?	1	2
19.	Do unrelated thoughts distract your attention while studying?	1	2
20.	If your mind continually wanders when studying, do you analyse yourself to find out why?	2	1
TOTAL SCORE			
NO	SECTION 6: EXAMINATION AND CLASS TEST	YES	NO
21.	Do you start studying only when it is a few weeks to the examinations?	1	2
22.	Do you consider eligibility and neatness of your written work while writing examinations?	2	1
23.	Do you have problems writing even the things you recall during examinations?	1	2
24.	Do you take time to plan and organise your points while writing examinations?	2	1
25.	Do you start well ahead of time to organise your studies and prepare for examinations?	1	2
26.	Do you get confused during exams because you found out that you were ill-prepared for the examinations?	2	1
TOTAL SCORE			
SECTION 7: TEACHER CONSULTATION			
27.	Do you conduct yourself in such a way as to enhance an appropriate interpersonal relationship with your teacher?	2	1
28.	Do you go to your teacher for explanation when you are unable to understand a particular subject?	2	1
29.	Do you feel shy and inadequate to meet your teacher for explanations?	1	2
TOTAL SCORE			
SECTION 8: STUDY PROCEDURE AND ORGANIZATION			
30.	Do you study in one particular place that is quiet and well lighted?	2	1
31.	Do you take short rests during long study session?	2	1
32.	Do you bring all study materials needed for a study session into your study room before you start studying?	2	1
TOTAL SCORE			
SECTION 9: TEST ANXIETY			
33.	Do you get upset whenever the teacher announces that an examination would take place?	1	2
34.	After reading through examination questions, do you panic and get confused if the questions are not familiar?	2	1
35.	Do you frequently feel like going to ease yourself just before or during examinations?	2	1
36.	While preparing, writing or after examinations, do you experience physical symptoms such as rapid heart beat, excessive perspiration, tense muscles, queasy, stomach and nausea?	1	2
TOTAL SCORE			

SCORES ON THE STUDY BEHAVIOUR INVENTORY (SBI)

SECTION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
RAW SCORE									
STAINES									

SBI DIAGNOSTIC PROFILE

9	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
8	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
7	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
6	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
5	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
4	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
3	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
2	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
1	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
0	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

SECTIONS

SCORING OF THE STUDY BEHAVIOUR INVENTORY (SBI)

The scoring of the SBI is based on the premise that for each question there is an answer which portrays a desirable study practice on the one hand and another which depicts an undesirable study practice. Answer which indicates desirable practice receive low scores (1). While the undesirable ones receive high scores (2). Yes answers could attract 2 or 1 points; depending on whether the answer portrays desirable or undesirable study behaviour. The same could be said of the no answer. For example:

DESIRABLE STUDY PRACTICE	SCORE	
	YES	NO
When you read, do you outline the salient points in the material studied?		

UNDESIRABLE STUDY PRACTICE	SCORE	
	YES	NO
Do you abandon your class assignment because it is difficult or boring?		

To obtain the total score for each section, add up all the points scored by the respondent in that section. Section 1

for instance, has four items in all. Add up the respondents' scores for each of the four items of section 1. The figure obtained becomes a total score for section 1. Record this score under the column "Total Score" at the end of Section 1. Do this for each of the nine sections (1 - 9) of the inventory. The total score for each section is then transferred to diagnostic profile. To find the stanine equivalent of each section.

How to complete the SBI Diagnostic Profile

The completion of the diagnostic profile is only relevant when the SBI is used for counselling. This is because the essence of the diagnostic profile is to enable the counsellor see at a glance the strengths and weaknesses of the students relative to the norming sample and their stand on the various study practice areas. This provides a formidable guide in educational counselling. To complete the diagnostic profile, the stanine scores for each section will be used to plot the graph in the inventory.

INTERPRETATION OF THE SBI

The next step after scoring and completing the diagnostic profile is for the student to examine the diagnostic profile critically to identify his strengths and weaknesses and also to determine his relative standing in study effectiveness. The peaks of the graph are areas of weaknesses of the respondent while the low points in the graph are areas of strength.

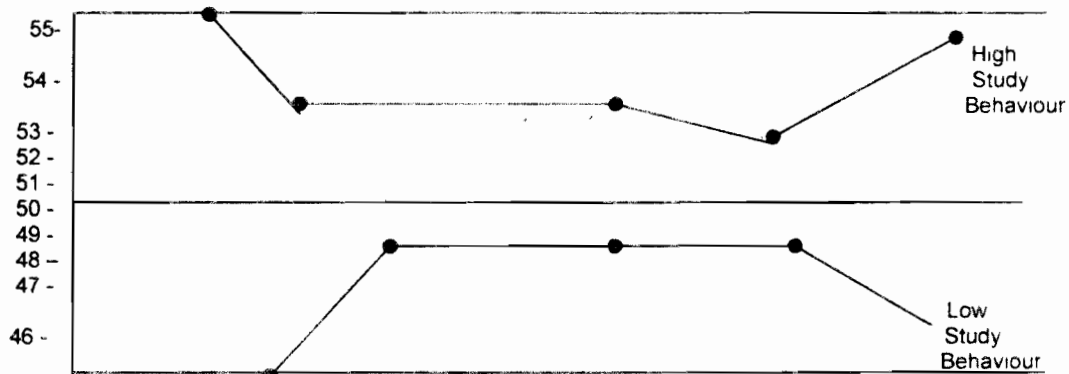


FIGURE 1: GRAPH SHOWING MEANS SCALE SCORES FOR STUDY BEHAVIOUR

SBI TABLE OF INTERPRETATION

SECTION	STANINE	REMARK
1 - 9	0 - 2	Very effective study practice.
1 - 9	3 - 4	Good study practice.
1 - 9	5 - 6	Moderate study practice.
1 - 9	6 - 7	Defective study practice.
1 - 9	7 - 8	Very defective study behaviour.

How Counsellors can use this Approaches:

In a bit of effort to aid students cultivates good study habits in contemporary Nigeria the researcher recommended the use of social learning/modelling techniques as observed by Bandura (1973). Today the use of modelling technique in behaviour modification is becoming popular among counsellors and social psychologists. Modelling involves exposing the individual to experiences, which would enable him to imitate and apply to himself. The social learning theory insists that most behaviours are learnt and not inborn. The theory attempts to specify how people learn some behaviours which social conditions produce and maintain behaviour patterns. He adds that reinforcement and imitation play major roles in social learning/modelling. As he went on to identified types of modelling to include: Live modelling; symbolic modelling; covert modelling; bibliotherapy modelling; Film/video taped modelling.

FOR EFFECTIVE MODELLING**Live Modelling:**

Daily, we learn by observing and imitating others who come in touch with us. In fact human beings learn both good and bad aspects of life through enacting those experiences and patterns they observe in others.

According to Essumen, Nwaogu and Nwachukwu (1990) live modally "is a vicarious form of learning in which an individual who needs behaviour change is exposed to the sensory experience of another person", it involves the individual trying to act or behave the way the other person(s) behave(s).

Generally most significant others like parents, teachers, pastors, counsellors, peers, siblings etc. consciously, or unconsciously play the roles of live models for the child. For example, in the class, the children try to model their lives towards that of their teachers in terms of hand-writing, speech, dressing, morals, and general attitudes to work and life. No wonder the saying "like teacher like pupils" "like father like son".

So counsellors may use this theory or any other that will serve this purpose.

SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATIONS

This study Behaviour: A counselling Approach addresses the most formidable obstacle to students' academic success namely; poor study behaviour. This paper is a bit of

effort to aid students cultivates good study habits in contemporary Nigeria.

The authors of this article strongly counsel students to take their studies seriously as their failure and success lies on it. Equally, the author draws the attention of students to the essentials of study behaviour: (i) Time Management, (ii) Organisation of study task, (iii) Homework and Assignment, (iv) Reading and note making (v) Listening and note taking, (vi) Concentration, (vii) Study procedures, (viii) Remembering Effectively, (ix) Teacher Consultation (x) Examination Behaviour, (xi) Motivation and Willpower.

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