

## **Poor Study Habit as an Educational Problem Among University Undergraduates In The Contemporary Times And Effective Management Strategies**

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**ABSTRACT** :Educational problems are multifaceted and are hindering factors that inhibit the maximal realization of learners' endowment. These problems could be leaner–resident, school–resident, home-resident or societal–resident. One of the consequences of these problems is academic underachievement and academic failure caused by poor or improper study habit. On the part of the affected students, ethological suggestions to motivate them for achievement and psycho-stimulants to develop their reading skills can be of use in reducing the effect of this educational problem, poor study habit. Studies have established the prevalence of poor study habit among the University undergraduates, which has led to poor performance in home assignments as well as in examinations. Hence, this study focuses on the factors that are capable of precipitating poor study habit which aggravate into educational problems and how they can be effectively managed to increase the level of academic achievement in the average undergraduate .The reduction effect will go a long way to build a nation where mediocrity will soon become a thing of the past. Integrity, as a value, will be further established as examination malpractice will be highly curbed in our institutions of learning.

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

In contemporary times, the success of the developed countries or the world have been linked to huge investment in human resources, but the societal problems in particular ,in the poverty stricken sub-Saharan Africa, has not made this possible. Other problems in the African society include that of education, employment, health, food and some others that could be affecting the national growth. No doubt, Nigeria is a highly populated country, and Onweh (2007) in his study established the fact that about half of the children's population completes the primary education. He further said that 81% of the relevant school age groups got enrolled into various educational institutions at different levels, but 69% managed to graduate. According to Onweh , secondary education in Nigeria grew at 10% yearly during the 1990s but access to it experienced great constraints due to complex admission processes and bottle necks created by administrative directives. Technical education then was neglected by the government. Higher education enrollment was so poor to the extent that 4% of the relevant age showed interest. This revealed the background to the problems encountered by Nigerian education and which are still lingering. Onweh further reiterated in his comparative study on the educational enrolment of places like South Africa which stood at 17%, India had 17%, Indonesia recorded 11%, and Brazil was not too lagging behind with its 12% stance. Nigeria was really found wanting compared to the points of the entries into the various educational systems of these afore mentioned countries.

The poor embrace that education got at the initial stage of its introduction to Nigeria has its resultant effect on the society and this manifested as the poor reading culture of the average Nigerian (Okebukola, 2004). The values of reading cannot be overemphasized as he further affirmed. Through reading, according to him, human beings have the tools to transmit knowledge to each succeeding generation. Douglas (2000), in his own case asserted that every child must be fully competent in reading to succeed in school and discharge responsibilities as a citizen in a democratic society. Reading is the foundation of much enjoyment in life and it is closely related to vocational efficiency (Adigun, 1984). These submissions however signaled that lack of reading skill is can be the cause of this educational problem, termed poor study habit. According to Tracy (2008), reading is the only form of entertainment that is also an essential part of life skills. Children with poor reading habit receive poor grades in school, get easily distracted and frustrated. According to Rubin (2002), children with poor reading habits have a higher chance of engaging in anti-social behaviours, like delinquency, truancy, school violence, bullying, hacking computers and examination malpractices. While poor reading habit can be instrumental to the destruction of any individual who is plagued with it, good reading habit do help to develop steadily and build a constructive mind. According to him, good reading skill matures into good study habit.

## **II. THE NEED FOR EFFECTIVE STUDY HABIT**

Another factor that could create educational problem is the non-possession of good study habit by any student. Acquisition of good study skills is highly effective for educational achievement in learners, even university undergraduates in the contemporary times. Oke (1996) gives reasons why students must study. These include self-improvement and academic achievement. High academic performance increases self dignity for examination malpractice will be a thing of the past in our academic institutions. To Oke, the root cause of most of antisocial behaviours in universities and mass failure can easily be traced to lack of adequate study habit.

## **III. THE FACTORS THAT HINDER THE ACQUISITION OF RIGHT STUDY SKILLS .**

### **{A} READING CULTURE**

In Nigeria, as reported by Henry (2004) in Aina, Ogungbemi, Adigun (2012), reveals that 40% of adult Nigerians never always read a non-fiction book from cover to cover after leaving school, and that an average Nigerian reads less than one book per year. According to him, the vast majority of the world's information is not digitalized but in print form, hence children must be encouraged to read early in life. However, parents that should be the mentors did not cultivate the reading culture themselves. This invariably will result into breeding students that are not likely to read in their schools not to talk of having good study habit. The quality of life of the people of a nation can be directly linked with the percentage of her citizens who are literate. Aina et al (2012) submits that Cuba which is adjacent to United States of America has the highest rate of literacy in the world. This explains why Cuba has a vibrant economy despite decades of diplomatic conflicts. Tracy (2008) asserts that being a former British colony, Nigeria's literacy culture ought to be as standardized as that of Britain. This cannot be compared to the 99% of British citizens claimed by (Henry, 2004) who can read and write.

### **{B} THE ECONOMIC FACTOR**

The incidence of poor study habit among University Undergraduates can as well be caused by poverty, an economic factor, which is a vital source that can hinder interest in the purchase of books. The per capita income of an average citizen in Nigeria is two dollars which is capable of affecting the reading culture of the citizenry as they will not be able to afford good books or attend good schools. (Hickliffe, 2007).

### **{C} THE ANTI-SOCIAL FACTORS .**

Aina et al (2012), identified anti social behaviour as another bane of reading culture. When not curbed on time in the student, he will get his focus shifted from school work. Little or no time will be given to studying. Most often times poor reading ability degenerates into poor study habit in the African undergraduates. The manifestation of corrupt practices in the educational institutions in form of trading sex for high scores or grades, selling of sub-standard books and hand-outs at high prices, exchange of money for examination grades and great incidences of examination malpractices that are looked away from, thereby going unsanctioned, are affecting the encouragement of proper or right study skills deserved in our university undergraduates.

### **{D} THE ENVIRONMENTAL NOISE CULTURE.**

It is also a visible factor that strengthens poor reading culture and invariably the unestablishment of good study habit, as pointed out by Aina et al (2012). Distractions among students also have really affected a right cultivation of good study habit. Most students do abandon their educational careers for the pursuit of money.

### **{E} THE LEARNING FACILITIES**

Also the adequate learning environments are not present in most learning institutions. Most of our universities do not have well equipped libraries. Half of the books stocked in these libraries are already obsolete. Most schools are situated in very populated areas, where distractions always prevent smooth the flow of learning. The recommendations that are mandatory for the establishment of libraries by the National Policy on Education (NPE), making public libraries adequate, and the existing ones to be properly funded by Okebukola (2004), should be adhered to.

## **IV. MANAGEMENT OF POOR STUDY HABIT**

The foregoing showcases the various causes of poor study habit, hence, it is suffice to suggest strategies for effective management of poor study habit through psychological principles. According to Owoyele (2012), there are number of techniques that are capable of managing effectively the incidence of poor study habit. The techniques include the following:

### [ A ] THE SQ3R METHOD

- [1] SQ3R stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, and Review
- [2] Survey: Get the best overall picture of what you're going to study before you study it in detail. It's like looking at a road map before going on a trip.
- [3] Question: Raise some questions on the learning material. The important things to learn are usually answers to questions. Questions should lead to emphasis on the what, why, how, when, who and where, of study material's content.
- [4] Read: Reading is not just running one's eyes over a textbook. When reading, it has to be done in an active manner. The actions involved are reading to understand and with the aim to remember what was read. Read to answer questions you have asked yourself or those questions posed by the instructor, those that the author has asked or questions taken from past question papers.
- [5] Recite: When you recite, you stop reading periodically to recall what you have read. Try to recall main headings, important ideas of concepts presented in bold or italicized, and what graphs, charts or illustrations do indicate.
- [6] Review: To review is a survey of what you have covered. It is a review of what you are supposed to accomplish, not what you are going to do. Re-reading to check-up forgotten details is an important part of the review process.

### [B] CONCEPT MAPPING

This study technique is more useful for studying materials in science. It is a very simple way of representing related concepts in a short form for the purpose of recalling. It involves the following steps:

- Read the passage thoroughly
- Identify the major concepts
- Rank them in order or class
- Link the concepts with arrows
- Draw out the final map concept
- Peruse the map from time to time
- Try and remember in details what each concept stands for

An example is provided below:

#### **Study Topic: ANIMALS**

Animals all have systems. Higher animals and lower animals use systems to perform life activities. Some life activities that both higher and lower organisms have are respiration, circulation and digestion. A system found only in higher animals is an internal skeletal system. Lower animals do not have internal skeletal system.

A Map using a combination of arrows and diagrams can be created while studying to aid retention and facilitate recall of the study materials during examination. (Novak et al (1983)).

### [ C ] SUMMARIZATION

Owoyele (2012), suggested another simple study technique. The aim is to study a material in details and attempt to put it in one's own words as concise as possible. It involves the following steps;

- Do a thorough study of the material
- Try to understand it very well
- Read the materials again for the purpose of analyzing and assimilating the points
- Take note of all the important ideas, analogies, and further details
- Make use of necessary learning materials. For example, dictionaries, maps, four-figure tables and so on, to aid understanding
- Jot down all the important points
- Develop the jottings into meaningful sentences. The sentences must be concise and meaningful.

**Grohol. J.M. (2012), also suggested some highly effective study skills to enhance academic achievement in university students .**

### [D] RIGHT APPROACH TO STUDY MATERIALS

The average student who will achieve at school work will need to possess the appropriate mindset. This can only be achieved when the student aims to think positively while studying.

- [1] Catastrophic thinking or negative thinking must be avoided. An achiever must not think of himself as a wreck because he could not start to study for an examination on time, rather, should see himself as someone who was only occupied as doing some other things that equally worth time giving.

- [2] A student should possess an objective mind that is always devoid of absolute thinking. An objective thinking stimulates improvement in the process towards achievement or success.

#### **[E] A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDY**

A place devoid of noise and of any form of distraction will always enhance concentration. Studying in the bedroom or where the television, radio and computers are, will never help good study.

#### **[F] PRESENCE OF STUDY MATERIALS**

The jotter, the dictionary, pencil, study materials (books), chair, table, past questions papers are those things that should be present at a place of study.

#### **[G] OUTLINING**

Outlining is a strategy that can help create a short or concise note taking while studying.

#### **[H] MNEMONICS**

This is a device that helps also in making the remembering of points noted during study, easy. This method is the use of simple connection or association of common words to help memorization. Example can be TGIF- 'Thank God It is Friday'

#### **[I] PRACTICE WITH STUDY GROUPS**

Classmates or Course mates can be in a group of not more than ten or less. This will go a long way to assist a learner in practicing materials learnt. It can be done through demonstration or role modeling.

#### **[J] TAKING OF BREAKS**

Realistic study time tables should leave room for relaxation or breaks during study. This is to allow the student rest and dozing or sleeping is avoided.

#### **[L] GOAL SETTING**

Goals and objectives must be set in study. Student must set a goal aiming at success while studying. This is a vital preparation tool to learn as the major objective for studying is to learn.

### **V. CONCLUSION**

On the parts of the affected students, ethological factors such as motivation for achievement and psycho – stimulants, have been established in the study. Through various studies there is the prevalence of poor study habit among the University undergraduates which has led to poor performance in home assignments as well as examinations. Hence, this study focuses on the factors that are capable of precipitating poor study habit which can result into educational problems that can frustrate and invariably truncate educational achievement and how they can be managed. The message here is that until a student handles a particular study material in the analytical ways highlighted, he is probably not ready for any examination on such study material. So, studying hard, using appropriate study technique, guarantees resounding success and creates confidence in the student in any examination condition. Thus, examination malpractice is avoided and integrity is established. The resultant effect is that a great and quality nation is built and the African society becomes a formidable one.

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