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Study Habits, Test Anxiety, and Learning Outcome of Students with Special Needs

ABSTRACT: This study investigated perceived relationships between study habits, test anxiety, and learning outcome among students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special) in Oyo, Nigeria. The study used correlational research design, which is ex-post facto in nature. Random sampling technique was used to select 264 participants for the study. Two validated and reliable instruments were adopted for data collection, namely TAI (Test Attitude Inventory) with $r = .85$ and SHC (Study Habits Checklist) with $r = .61$ were adopted to collect data for the study. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that study habits and learning outcome of students with special needs are positively and significantly related ($r = .380$; $df = 262$; $P < .05$); while negative but significant relationship was found between test anxiety and learning outcome ($r = -.480$; $df = 262$; $P < .05$). Also, there were significant differences in study habits ($t = 2.4201$; $df = 262$; $P < .05$) and test anxiety ($t = 1.860$; $df = 262$; $P < .05$) between male and female ($t = 2.4201$; $df = 262$; $P < .05$). It was, therefore, recommended among others that study skills training should be incorporated into the school curriculum of the Nigeria's National Certificate in Education Programme. Also that students with special needs be encouraged and motivated to inculcate good study habits in their programme.

KEYS WORD: Study Habits; Test Anxiety; Students with Special Needs; Learning Performance; College of Education Special.

RESUME: "Kebiasaan Belajar, Uji Kecemasan, dan Hasil Belajar Mahasiswa Berkebutuhan Khusus". Penelitian ini mengkaji hubungan yang dirasakan antara kebiasaan belajar, uji kecemasan, dan hasil belajar mahasiswa berkebutuhan khusus di Sekolah Tinggi Pendidikan Khusus di Negara Bagian Oyo, Nigeria. Kajian menggunakan desain penelitian korelasional, yang merupakan "ex-post facto" secara alamiah. Teknik sampel acak digunakan untuk memilih 264 peserta dalam penelitian ini. Dua instrumen divalidasi dan dapat diandalkan, yakni ITS (Inventori Test Sikap) dengan $r = 0.85$ dan PKB (Pengecekan Kebiasaan Belajar) dengan $r = 0.61$, yang diadopsi untuk mengumpulkan data penelitian. Empat hipotesis dirumuskan dan diuji dengan tingkat signifikansi 0.05. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa kebiasaan belajar dan hasil belajar mahasiswa berkebutuhan khusus memiliki hubungan positif dan signifikan ($r = 0.380$; $df = 262$; $P < 0.05$); sementara hubungan negatif tetapi signifikan ditemukan antara uji kecemasan dan hasil belajar ($r = -.480$; $df = 262$; $P < 0.05$). Juga ada perbedaan yang signifikan dalam kebiasaan belajar ($t = 2.4201$; $df = 262$; $P < 0.05$) dan uji kecemasan ($t = 1.860$; $df = 262$; $P < 0.05$) antara laki-laki dan perempuan ($t = 2.4201$; $df = 262$; $P < 0.05$). Oleh karena itu dianjurkan, antara lain, latihan keterampilan belajar harus dimasukkan kedalam kurikulum sekolah dalam Program Pendidikan Bersertifikat Nasional di Nigeria. Juga para mahasiswa berkebutuhan khusus harus didorong dan dimotivasi untuk menanamkan kebiasaan belajar yang baik dalam program mereka.

KATA KUNCI: Kebiasaan Belajar; Uji Kecemasan; Mahasiswa Berkebutuhan Khusus; Hasil Belajar; Sekolah Tinggi Pendidikan Khusus.

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INTRODUCTION

The word “studying” has been given various definitions by various authors and scholars depending on each scholar’s perspective of the concept. It is a complex concept that involves the use of the senses of sight and hearing. It is an act of learning one information or the other. Without studying, no test or examination can be passed. People study for different purposes such as for pleasure, to get information, to pass one test or examination, while others study for fun. For studying to be meaningful, people develop certain habit (Gallo, 2007; and Dadzie, 2008).

By study habits, O.A. Oyediji (1991), as cited also in J.C. Ajibabi (2010), meant well planned and deliberate method of study, which has attained a form of consistency on the part of the student towards understanding school courses and passing examinations (Oyediji, 1991; and Ajibabi, 2010). Through effective study habits, students would be able to be involved fully in teaching and learning processes, attending lectures promptly, doing and turning in class work, continuous assessment and assignment, imbibing good reading culture, making a study schedule and adhering to it, jotting notes during the lesson, and personal or group studies.

On the other hand, anxiety is a fundamental human emotion that was recognized as long as five thousand years ago (Sue, Sue & Sue, 2006). Many observers regard anxiety as a basic condition of modern existence. Yet “reasonable loses” of anxiety act as a safeguard to keep us from ignoring danger. Anxiety appears to have an adaptive function. For example, many persons and students report anxiety in terms of overload at home, work, or school; family demands; financial concerns; and interpersonal conflicts.

Anxiety is a familiar emotion, which is caused by a perceived danger or threat to individuals (Hockenbury, 2010). The word anxiety is originated from “to vex or trouble”, which means absence or presence of psychological stress that cause feelings of fear, concerns, and horror (Salend, 2011).

Thus, anxiety refers to a psychological and physiological state consists of emotional, somatic, cognitive, and behavioural components (Seligman, Walker & Rosenhan, 2010).

However, overwhelming anxiety can disrupt social, academic, occupational functioning or produce significant distress. Thus, test anxiety, according to S.S. Sansgiry & K. Sail (2006), is the reaction to stimuli that are associated with an individual’s experience of testing or evaluation situation (Sansgiry & Sail, 2006). Test anxiety is, therefore, considered one of the contributing factors on students’ GPA (Grade Point Average).

C.D. Spielberger (1980) defined test anxiety as an apprehension that occurs, when a student encounters examinations in any form and at any level (Spielberger, 1980). According to A.S. McDonald (2001), between two thirds of high school students appear to experience uncomfortable levels of test anxiety (McDonald, 2001).

Students with special needs are group of learners with various unique disability and handicapping conditions or uniquely high potentials, which prevent them from benefiting from normal class arrangement in regular schools. They, therefore, need special class arrangement that take care of their unique needs for maximum educational benefits (Ozaji & Mugu, 1999; and Odiba, 2013).

In other words, students with special needs are those who need special education, because of their unique needs. The students in this category include the hearing impaired, the intellectually disabled, the visually impaired, the learning disabled, the gifted and the talented, the multiple impaired, the physically impaired, health and behaviorally impaired, and others.

O.S. Nkwoagba (2009), as cited also in N.J. Otubelu & O.D. Otubelu (2012), described persons with special needs as those individuals that are different in one way or the other from other individuals, who are considered normal by the greater segment of the society (Nkwoagba, 2009; and Otubelu & Otubelu, 2012). The difference may be

in mental, physical, behavioural, or social inadequacies. Apparently, such persons may be found to be incapable of functioning adequately within the community or school. Consequently, such persons may require special education services to enable them develop their maximum capacity both academically and socially.

It is believed that handicapping conditions could hinder an individual to learn. Coupled with this, students with special needs could exhibit anxiety during test since they may not have full preparation and study habit to prepare for the test. Inability to lay hands on text-books, hand-outs, equipment, and materials could hinder them from writing test.

However, anxiety, according to A.L. Collins & H.L. Vogel (2006), as cited also in J.C. Ajibabi (2010), has been known to have both facilitating and debilitating effects on learning outcome (Collins & Vogel, 2006; and Ajibabi, 2010). It should be noted that when a student experiences a high level of tension, shock, and panic, disorganization could set in and affect his or her performance.

Poor study habits and test anxiety are common occurrence among regular students. They are even more pronounced among students with special needs. So, it is needful to change, remediate the bad impression on study habits and test anxiety.

This study will give room to both the teachers and the students that they can do better if allowed. This study, therefore, examined the relationship among study habit, text anxiety, and learning outcome of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria.

The specific objectives of this study are to: (1) determine any significant relationship between study habits and leaning outcome of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education [Special], Oyo, Nigeria; (2) examine any significant relationship between test anxiety and leaning outcome of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education [Special], Oyo, Nigeria; (3) investigate any significant gender difference in the study habits of students

with special needs at the Federal College of Education [Special], Oyo, Nigeria; and (4) determine any significant gender difference in test anxiety of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education [Special], Oyo, Nigeria.

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance in the study, as following here:

H_{0_1} - "There is no significant relationship between study habits and learning outcome of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria".

H_{0_2} - "There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and learning outcome of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria".

H_{0_3} - "There is no significant gender difference in the study habits of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria".

H_{0_4} - "There is no significant gender difference in test anxiety of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria".

METHOD

The method adopted in carrying out this study is as discussed below:

Design: The study adopted a correlation design, which is ex-post factor in nature as it concerns the relationship of the variables.

Population of the Study: The population of the study consists of over five thousand students in the College across all the three levels.

Sample and Sampling Technique: The sample size for the study comprised two hundred and sixty-three participants selected through randomly selected to include all categories of students with special needs.

Instrumentation: Two validated and reliable instruments were adopted for data collection. These are TAI (Test Attitude Inventory), with reliability value of .85 developed by C.D. Spielberger *et al.* (1978), as cited also in J.C. Ajibabi (2010); and SHC (Study Habits Checklist), with reliability

Table 1:
 Relationship between Study-Habits and Learning Outcome

Variables	\bar{x}	SD	N	r	P	Remark	Decision
Learning Outcome	47.22	5.43	264	.380	.000	Sig.	Reject H_{01}
Study Habits	2.61	4.53					

Table 2:
 Relationship between Test Anxiety and Learning Outcome

Variables	\bar{x}	SD	N	r	P	Rmk	Decision
Learning Outcome	47.22	5.43	264	-.480	.000	Sig.	Reject H_{02}
Test Anxiety	2.20	2.50					

value of .61 developed by the CCC (Cook Counseling Centre) in 2006.

The instrument was scored on a modified four-point Likert type scale ranging from “not much on like me” to “much on like me”. The items were scrutinized by three experts to determine its face and content validity. A pilot study was conducted to re-estimate the reliability of the instruments. The reliability of the instruments was estimate by through Cronbach Alpha, with Alpha values of 0.88 and .73 for TAI and SHC respectively. The dependent variable, that’s learning outcome of students with special needs, was measured with the use of 200 level results on special education courses.

Methods of Data Analysis: Inferential statistics, specifically Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the first two hypotheses, while t-test was used to test the last two ones. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of the study are thus presented based on the hypothesis postulated. H_{01} – “There is no significant relationship between study habits and learning outcome of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria”. See table 1.

Table 1 shows a weak, positive, and significant correlation between learning outcome and study habits of students with special needs ($r = .380$; $P < .05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that “there is no significant relationship

between learning outcome and study habits of students with special needs at Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria” is rejected.

From the table 1, the relationship value was found to be 0.380, an indication of positive relationship between learning outcome and study habits of students with special needs. This means that good study habit is associated with higher performance. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected.

H_{02} – “There is no significant relationship between test anxiety and learning outcome of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria”. See table 2.

From table 2, it was discovered that there was negative significant relationship between test anxiety and students with special needs’ learning outcome ($r = -0.48$; $P < .05$). This means that the higher their level of test anxiety, the lower their learning outcome because of the inverse relationship between the two variables. Hence, the hypothesis was rejected.

H_{03} – “There is no significant gender difference in the study habits of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria”. See table 3.

Table 3 showed that there was significant difference in the study habits of male and female students with special needs ($t = 2.4201$; $df = 262$; $P < .05$). Therefore, the third hypothesis which states that “there is no significant gender difference in the study habits of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo,

Table 3:
Gender Difference in the Study Habits of Students with Special Needs

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t-	Sig	Decision
Male	81	1.40	2.24	262	2.4201	.001	Rejected
Female	183	2.62	3.26				

Table 4:
Gender Difference in Test Anxiety of Students with Special Needs

Gender	N	X	SD	df	t-	Sig	Decision
Male	81	1.50	1.40	262	1.860	.001	Rejected
Female	183	2.50	2.10				

Nigeria" was rejected.

H_{04} - "There is no significant gender difference in test anxiety of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria". See table 4.

From table 4, it is shown that there is significant difference between the level of test anxiety of male and female students with special needs ($t = 1.860$; $df = 262$; $P < .05$). Female students with special needs were more text anxious than their male counterpart. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis which states that "there is no significant gender difference in test anxiety of students with special needs at the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, Nigeria" was rejected.

Discussions of Results. From table 1, it is shown clearly that there is positive relationship between students with special needs learning outcome and study habit ($r = .380$; $P < .05$). Research finding showed that high development of good/positive study habit in an individual will bring about better learning outcome hence, the higher the ability to possess good study habit, the better the learning outcome. This is in line with some previous studies, like those of A. Ikeotuonye & F.A. Bashmir (1986) and J.C. Ajibabi (2010). In the same vein, R.O. Ogbodo (2002) also said that a well be planned study habit will drastically increase learning outcome in students (*cf* Ikeotuonye & Bashmir, 1986; Ogbodo, 2002; and Ajibabi, 2010).

From table 2 shows a significant inverse relationship between test anxiety and learning outcome ($r = -.480$; $P < .05$). It means that the higher the level of test anxiety, the lower the student learning outcome, that

is increase in test anxiety will reduce the learning outcome of students with special needs. This present finding agrees to the study of V.U. Uguma & S.L. Apkama (2005). In the revers, S.J. Salend (2011) reported that there was statistic correlation between test anxiety and academic performance (*cf* Uguma & Akpama, 2005; and Salend, 2011).

Furthermore, table 3 showed that there is significant difference in the study habits of male and female students with special needs ($t = -2.4201$; $df = 262$; $P < .05$). Unlike in those days, where more concentration and expectations rested on male children, the new wave in education has given room for diversion on male students to female students and gender is no barrier to learning and better academic outcome. According to J.L. Lupart, E. Cannon & J. Telfer (2002), male and female students do have positive attitude towards school and good study habits. Meaning that disability is not a barrier to learning performance and development of study habit and test anxiety (Lupart, Cannon & Telfer, 2002).

Finally, table 4 shows that there was significant difference in test anxiety between male and female students with special needs ($t = -1.860$; $df = 262$; $P < .05$). In this context, H.T. Everson, R.E. Millsap & C.M. Rodriguez (1991) and M.M. Moore (2006) reported that female students were more test anxious than males; thus, the finding of this study agreed in line with their findings (Everson, Millsap & Rodriguez, 1991; and Moore, 2006). Female students reported higher level of text anxiety than male students (Antwi-Danso, Amissali & Effirm, 2015). While in J.C.

Ajibabi (2010), in his study, male students showed more test anxious than their female counterparts (Ajibabi, 2010).

CONCLUSION

It is critical clear and evidence that there is a positive relationship among study habit, test anxiety, and learning performance among students with special needs. Ability to develop study habit will bring about high learning performance, and that test ability to be anxious in worth test or examination will lead to failure or poor performance vice versa.

Disability is no barrier hence students with special needs could also perform like their "normal" counterpart and they can also undergo emotions, like anxiety, happiness, sorrow, etc. Also, the female students with special needs are more test anxious than their male counterpart because of feminine nature.

Lastly, writing test and passing examination is a criterion to move from one level to another; it is expected for students with special needs to put away fidgeting, fear, lack of concentration, and anxiety in order to cope with their studies and foster good social interactions develop meaningful relationships with their "normal" students in order to attain greater heights.

Based on the above conclusion, the following recommendations are made: (1) Study skills training should be incorporated into the school curriculum of the Nigeria's National Certificate in Education Programme; (2) Students with special needs should be encouraged and motivated to inculcate good study habits in their programme; and (3) Students with special needs should be advised on the need to be less test anxious as the present study has revealed that test anxiety affects their learning outcome negatively.¹

¹**Statement:** We, hereby, declare that this paper is not product of plagiarism, not to be submitted, reviewed as well as published by other scholarly journals; and if our paper has been received, we will not also withdrawal from the *SOSIOHUMANIKA* journal in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia.

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(Source: <http://osun.gov.ng>, 25/4/2016)

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