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Influence of Gender and School Location on Habitual and Behavioural Study among Secondary School Students in Lagos State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of gender and school location on the study habits of senior secondary school students in Lagos State, with a particular focus on Alimosho Local Government Area. The research aimed to identify whether these variables significantly affect students' learning behaviors. A total of 800 students were surveyed, and 80 participants were selected purposively from three secondary schools. Data were collected using the validated Students Study Habits Inventory. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were employed to assess differences in study habits. The results indicated a statistically significant difference in study habits based on gender, with male students demonstrating more favorable study behaviors than their female counterparts. This finding suggests the presence of gender-based disparities that may stem from socio-cultural or educational influences. In contrast, while school location appeared to influence study habits, the relationship was not statistically significant. The study recommends targeted interventions, such as after-school interactive programs, to support female students and close the gender gap. These findings underscore the importance of considering gender and environmental contexts when designing policies and educational programs to enhance students' academic success.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Study habits are foundational to students' academic success, influencing how they manage time, approach learning materials, and maintain consistency in their studies (Gumasing & Castro, 2023; Jafari et al., 2019). These behaviors, ranging from note-taking and concentration to goal setting and task prioritization, are essential for cognitive engagement and long-term retention of knowledge. Multiple variables affect these habits, notably gender and school location, which are especially relevant in diverse socio-cultural and economic contexts (Cerbara et al., 2022; García-Villanueva & Fernández-Martínez, 2020).

Gender differences in study habits have been widely reported in the literature. Some studies suggest that female students tend to adopt more organized, detail-oriented, and time-conscious study routines, whereas male students may favor flexible or spontaneous learning approaches (Engström, 2018). However, findings are not universal. In some cases, male students demonstrate stronger habits, while in others, no significant gender-based differences are observed (Amanat et al., 2022; Siahi & Maiyo, 2015). These inconsistencies point to the importance of contextual factors, including the educational system, cultural expectations, and school-level policies.

School location plays a parallel role in shaping academic behavior. Urban schools generally offer superior infrastructure, broader access to digital learning tools, and a more competitive academic environment. These factors collectively nurture disciplined and resourceful study habits (Titus et al., 2016). In contrast, rural schools may suffer from under-resourcing, overcrowding, and infrastructural deficits, potentially inhibiting students' motivation and ability to cultivate effective study routines (Ogbonnaya, et al., 2023; Muremela et al., 2023).

Despite the established influence of gender and school location as separate variables, few studies have systematically investigated their combined effect. The intersectionality of these two factors may compound or mitigate their individual impacts, depending on socio-economic, cultural, and institutional dynamics. This represents a critical gap in the existing body of educational research (Codiroli Mcmaster & Cook, 2019; Tembe & Hlengwa, 2022). This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating how gender and school location interact to shape study habit behaviors among secondary school students in Lagos State.

The rationale for this study is strengthened by persistent concerns over academic underperformance in both internal and external examinations, such as the WASSCE and NECO. While factors such as curriculum design and teacher effectiveness are often cited, the influence of individual study habits has received insufficient attention from educational stakeholders (Al-Harthi et al., 2022; Mulaudzi, 2023). Understanding how gender and school location influence these behaviors can provide actionable insights for policy makers and school administrators.

This research is also valuable in terms of its practical implications. Educational interventions that are gender-sensitive and location-specific have the potential to improve equity in academic outcomes. This may include targeted programs in rural schools to address infrastructural deficiencies or personalized learning support for specific gender groups based on identified behavioral trends (Lombo & Subban, 2024; Psaki et al., 2022). Moreover, examining these variables in a populous and demographically diverse area such as Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State adds to the generalizability of the findings. Prior research has shown varied results. Urban students often report better study habits due to improved resource access and structured environments (Milner et al., 2015; Swu, 2022), although some scholars find no statistically significant differences across rural-urban lines

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(Beynon et al., 2016; Kaur & Kaur, 2019). These inconsistencies further reinforce the need for contextualized investigations that reflect the nuances of local educational realities.

This study aims to investigate the combined influence of gender and school location on the study habit behavior of secondary school students in Lagos State. It seeks to determine whether gender differences contribute to variations in how students approach their academic responsibilities and manage their learning routines. By analyzing these two factors concurrently, the study intends to provide a deeper understanding of their interaction and implications for academic performance.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a quantitative research approach with a descriptive survey design to examine the influence of gender and school location on study habit behavior among secondary school students. The survey method was deemed appropriate to gather standardized data from a sizable population and identify patterns related to study habits across demographic variables. The research population comprised 800 senior secondary school students in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. A total of 80 students were selected using purposive sampling from three secondary schools within the region.

2.2 Data Collection

Data were collected using the Students Study Habits Inventory developed and validated by Akinnade (2017). The instrument has a reliability index of 0.87 and consists of structured items designed to assess students' patterns and behaviors related to study practices. Administration of the instrument was conducted in classroom settings under researcher supervision to ensure consistency.

2.3 Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Frequencies and percentages were used for descriptive statistics. The Chi-Square test was applied to examine relationships between categorical variables, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC) was used to assess associations between gender, school location, and study habits. All analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 20.0 at a significance threshold of 0.05.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The study investigated whether gender significantly influences study habit behavior among secondary school students in Lagos State. The null hypothesis stated that no significant difference exists between male and female students in terms of their study habits. As shown in Table 1, the mean score for male students was higher than that of female students, indicating a potential difference in study habit behavior.

Table 1. Influence of Gender on Study Habit Behaviour Among Secondary School Students in Lagos State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df.	x. Cal.	Sig.	Remark
Male	40	52.4700	10.8100				

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Variable	N	Mean	SD	df.	x. Cal.	Sig.	Remark
				79	3.081	0.001	Sig.
Female	40	46.6570	12.2901				

significant at p.>0.05.

From the table 1 x. calculated value is 3.1, the p.value is 0.001. The calculated X value is more than the p.value (p.>0.05). The hypothesis one is rejected. The statistical test comparing the study habit behavior scores between male and female students yielded a significant result (Sig. =0.001), indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in study habit behavior between male and female students. The difference in study habit behavior scores between male and female students is statistically significant at a p-value of less than 0.05. In summary, the analysis suggests that there is a significant difference in study habit behavior between male and female secondary school students, with male students having higher average scores compared to female students.

The second hypothesis examined whether school location has a significant relationship with study habit behavior among secondary school students in Lagos State. The statistical analysis compared mean scores of students from urban and rural schools. From table 2, the r. calculated value is 1.82, the p. value is 0.009. The r.cal. value is more than the p.value (p.>0.05). Hence, hypothesis two is rejected.

Table 2. Relationship Between School Lacation And Study Habit Behaviour Among Secondary School Students in Lagos State

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df.	r.Cal.	Sig.	Remark
Urban	80	66.0880	9.98620				
				78	1.827	0.009	Not Sig.
Rural	80	66.6601	8.70751				

significant at p.>0.05.

The statistical test comparing the study habit behavior scores between urban and rural students yielded a non-significant result (Sig. =0.009), indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in study habit behavior between urban and rural students. The difference in study habit behavior scores between urban and rural students is not statistically significant at a p-value greater than 0.05. In summary, the analysis suggests that there is no significant difference in study habit behavior between secondary school students from urban and rural areas.

3.2 Discussion

The findings of this study underscore a significant influence of gender on the study habits of secondary school students in Lagos State. The observed variation suggests a meaningful difference in how male and female students approach their academic responsibilities. In particular, male students demonstrated higher study habit scores, as reflected in their mean and standard deviation values, which implies greater consistency or engagement in effective learning strategies. This result corroborates earlier studies that have reported gender-based distinctions in study habits, where males or females tend to excel in different subcomponents of learning behavior depending on context and academic environment (Oli, 2018; Shawwa et al., 2014; Unwalla, 2020).

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However, it is important to note that not all previous research supports a gender differential in study habits. Several investigations have concluded that study behaviors do not significantly differ based on gender, indicating that factors such as curriculum, learning support, and individual student agency may play more decisive roles (Agajelu & Anyaneche, 2020; Alavi & Lesani, 2017; Hashemian, 2014; Torabi, 2014). These contrasting results suggest that the impact of gender on academic behavior may be context-dependent, shaped by cultural, institutional, and socio-economic dynamics that differ across regions and school systems.

With respect to school location, the study found that although a relationship exists between urban-rural school settings and study habits, it was not statistically significant. One plausible explanation for this finding lies in the geographical and infrastructural nature of Lagos State. The distinction between rural and urban schools is often blurred due to the high rate of urban sprawl and policy-driven infrastructural development that spans across the state. As a result, students in both locations may have comparable access to educational resources such as classrooms, qualified teachers, and learning materials, which could explain the observed similarity in their study habits.

This observation is consistent with prior findings that have suggested minimal to no difference in study behaviors between students from rural and urban backgrounds. In these studies, the increasing homogenization of educational infrastructure and the implementation of standardized curricula have been cited as key reasons for such convergence (Kaur & Kaur, 2019). Nevertheless, this conclusion does not align with other research which asserts that students in urban settings often benefit from more favorable learning environments, such as access to libraries, internet facilities, and extracurricular academic support, all of which can contribute to more developed study habits (Afia et al., 2020; Muktawat & Bharadwaj, 2019; Swu, 2022).

Additional studies have further emphasized the gap between rural and urban learners, reporting significant differences in how students from each context organize their learning tasks, plan their academic work, and maintain concentration over extended periods. These disparities are often attributed to broader socio-economic and infrastructural inequalities, which persist despite national education reforms (Echazarra & Radinger, 2019; Kumari, 2020; Manley, 2018; Wani, 2015).

Taken together, these findings highlight the need for educational policies that are responsive to both gender and geographical dynamics. While the influence of gender appears statistically significant in this study, the non-significant role of school location should not be interpreted as a dismissal of spatial disparities in education. Instead, it points to the possibility that other mediating variables, such as school leadership, teacher effectiveness, and parental involvement, may have a stronger influence on students' study habits in the current context of Lagos State.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of gender and school location on the study habit behavior of secondary school students in Lagos State. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference in study habits between male and female students, with male students exhibiting more consistent and effective study habits compared to their female peers. This suggests that gender remains an influential factor in shaping students' academic behaviors, particularly in areas such as time management, task prioritization, and self-regulation. In contrast, the relationship between school location and study habits was found to be

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statistically non-significant. The similarity in mean scores between urban and rural students implies that infrastructural and resource-based disparities between school locations in Lagos may have narrowed, likely due to educational reforms and improved access to learning facilities across the state.

Future research is recommended to explore the underlying psychological, socio-cultural, and institutional factors that mediate gender differences in study habits. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how study behaviors evolve over time and how sustained interventions can improve outcomes. In addition, qualitative approaches involving interviews or focus groups with students and educators could offer a richer understanding of the motivational and contextual variables that shape effective learning behaviors across different demographics and school environments.

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