

Study Skills and Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis

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Article History	Abstract
Original Research Article	<i>This study examined study skills and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. The study adopted correlational research design. Three (3) research questions and three (3) hypotheses guided the study. The population comprised all senior secondary school students in Rivers State. The population was 35,805 senior secondary school students. The sample comprised 400 students selected through Taro Yamane and stratified random sampling technique. The researcher developed a self-structured questionnaire titled “Study Skills and Students’ Academic Performance Questionnaire” (SSSAPQ). The instrument was divided into two parts, A and B. Part A is made up of demographic variables such as gender, and age. Part B is divided into two (2) areas: “Study Skills Questionnaire” (SHQ), and “Students’ Academic Performance Questionnaire” (SAPQ). The SSSAPQ was validated and the reliability was determined using test re-test method. 30 students who were not part of the sample were given the SSSAPQ. The scores were correlated to obtain the reliability indices were as follows; SSQ ($r=0.83$) and SAPQ ($r=.80$). Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to answer and test all the hypotheses. The study revealed that private time management, note taking, and reading skills had very strong positive relationship with academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis if Rivers State. Based on the study recommended that students should develop good personal time management, note taking and good reading skills to achieve higher academic performance. School principals school help students by reducing stress level of students.</i> Keywords: academic performance, note taking, private time management, reading skills, study skills.
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Copyright © 2026 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited. Citation: Micah, A., Agbor, P. E. O., & Maclean, O. (2026). Study skills and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. UKR Journal of Education and Literature, 2(4), 56-63.	

Introduction

Academic performance is used to describe students’ cognitive ability. Dike and Maclean (2024) defined academic performance as the extent to which students achieve educational objectives and goals. Academic performance is the degree or level of success which is attained at the end of an academic pursuit. Assessing an individual through test and systematic observation is a yard stick for gauging one’s level of academic performance (Adedokun, Ajibade, Popoola, & Babatunde, 2020). Academic performance is used to denote students’

intellectual abilities. Academic performance also denotes excellence signaling that the students have demonstrated expected mastery skills in subjects offered by the students. Study skills refer to the techniques, methods, and strategies students employ to facilitate effective learning and academic success. Good study skills such as proper time management, active note-taking, goal-oriented reading and teacher’s consultation have been shown to significantly enhance cognitive processing and information retention (Nwokolo, Nwadinobi, & Ubah, 2026). Azikiwe (2018) in

Dike and Maclean (2024) defined good study habit as the adoption of way and manner a student plans his private studies or reading, after classroom learning so as to attain mastery of the subjects. Study skills are consistent patterns and strategies students adopt in the process of learning such as time management, note-taking, reading schedules, concentration techniques, revision practices and the use of instructional materials. Badau (2018) opined that Study skills refer to the consistent and regular practices, ritual or routines that students assume in the course of acquiring or pursuit for knowledge. He further opined that study skills are the behaviours, attitudes, and practices students steadily adopt in organizing, assimilating, and reviewing learning materials. These habits are contributory in shaping the usefulness of learning and retention.

Effective study skills improve understanding, retention and academic achievement, while poor study skills may result in inadequate preparation, poor comprehension and low academic performance. Effective study skills enable students to approach learning tasks systematically and independently. Such habits include regular reading, proper scheduling, note-taking, revision practices and effective use of learning materials. These habits promote understanding, retention and application of knowledge.

Academic performance among students, particularly those in senior secondary schools, is a multidimensional outcome determined by a range of psychological and behavioral factors. Academic performance remains a central concern in educational field, especially in developing countries where education is seen as a serious driver of social mobility and national development. One of the most persistent challenges in secondary education is the underperformance of students in high-stakes examinations, despite considerable investments in infrastructure and curriculum reforms. Ahuezuilo and Mbachu (2026) asserted that intellectuals have increasingly turned attention to student-centered variables such as study skills and teachers' teaching methods, identifying their direct impact on learning outcomes. Academic performance can also be seen as the successful achievement of some goal requiring a certain effect in the discipline, subject or the degree of success accomplished in an academic pursuit or endeavour. Academic performance is geared towards the achievement Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Particularly, it correspond with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which intends to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and boost lifelong learning opportunities for all" (United Nations, 2015).

Omeje (2020) in Dike and Maclean (2024) suggested that good study skills are associated with enhanced academic performance, as they improve students' aptitude to process and retain academic material. It also refers to the

behavioural patterns and strategies students use to process and assimilate academic content as well as materials. Effective study skills typically include time management, note-taking, consistent revision strategies, concentration, reading techniques, setting study goals, and seeking clarification on challenging and topics that the students do not understand.

There are several empirical studies that have explored the relationship between study skills and the academic achievement of students in different educational environments. Ezebuola and Wodi (2026) investigated the impact of time management strategies on the academic achievement of secondary school students in public schools in Rivers State, Nigeria and found a significant positive correlation between effective time management and students' academic achievement. Likewise, Khan, Ashraf and Nadeem (2020) investigated the influence of study skills on academic achievement of students in senior secondary schools in Lagos state of Nigeria and discovered that efficient study habits had considerable influence on the academic performance of students. In another study, Mensah and Boateng (2023) studied the association between note-taking behaviour and academic achievement among senior high school students in Accra, Ghana. The data indicated a substantial beneficial relationship between effective note taking techniques and academic achievement of students. Therefore, the authors suggested that school administrators and educational leaders should implement regular training programs to offer students effective note taking techniques and other essential study skills that can boost learning outcomes and overall academic success.

Ahmed, and Mohammed. 2020. "Reading Skills and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Kano State, Nigeria. The study demonstrated that the reading skills greatly influence the academic success of the children. The study suggested that teachers should assist kids to acquire good reading habits to support improved academic accomplishment. Finally, Ojo and Adewale (2022) carried out a study on Reading Habits and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Reading habits were proven to have considerable impact on students' academic progress.

Furthermore, Good study skills involve a structured, organized and planned routine that promotes regular engagement with academic tasks, reduces procrastination, and boosts memory retention. Also, good study skills are proactive and consistent behaviours that promote learning efficiency and academic achievement. On the contrary, poor study skills such as cramming, lack of planning, and multitasking can result in anxiety, low academic achievement, and reduced self-confidence according to Okoye and Okezie (2021).

This paper explores the concept of study skills, their components, and their influence on students in public senior secondary schools, with a focus on recent empirical findings. Some key variables for Study skills includes: private/personal time management, regular class note review, reading and comprehension skills, concentration and attention span, home/study environment, study routine and consistency, motivation for studying (Ihunwo & Maclean, 2026). Each helps explain how study skills influence academic performance. Operative study skills are often up to the students and their support, however there are confirmations that they are increasingly taught at secondary schools and even university levels. The development of effective study skills contributes significantly to students' academic success, productivity, and personal development. However, technological advancement and the increasing use of the internet have significantly influenced students' study skills. Digital learning platforms, multimedia resources, online libraries, and electronic study materials have transformed the ways students access, process, and retain information. Many students now rely on internet-based materials for assignments, revision, and independent learning. While these technological resources can enhance learning and academic engagement, improper use may also expose students to distractions that negatively affect concentration and study effectiveness.

Self-Regulated Learning Theory (Zimmerman, 1986; 2002)

The theory which is the basis of this study is the Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) Theory by Barry J. Zimmerman in 1989. This idea proposed that students can use their cognitive, motivational, and behavioral processes in an active way to reach academic goals. Zimmerman (1986) stated forcefully that the interaction between personal, behavioral and environmental are variables in successful learning and academic performance. The Phases of Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) 3 principles were established in the Self-Regulated Learning (SRL). Goal setting, planning, and strategic task analysis Performance Phase Implementation of strategies, self-monitoring, and time management Self-Reflection Phase Self-assessment of performance and modification of techniques for future projects. The components of SRL include; cognitive strategies (Note taking, summarization, rehearsal and elaboration), motivational regulation (Maintaining effort, regulating fear and boosting persistence), behavioral regulation (Time management, organization and environment structuring). Students who engage in effective Self-Regulated Learning are better equipped to control study skills, manage emotions, and control test anxiety, which results in improved academic performance. Zimmerman's theory is directly applicable to the current

study as it relates study skills and academic achievement. Zimmerman's argument was heavily in favor of the fact that students who self-regulate are more likely to develop a consistent study habit, use coping methods to lessen student stress and enhance learning achievements.

Statement of the Problem

Poor academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis has been a recurrent educational problem especially as it is reflected in external examination results like West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), National Examination Council (NECO) and Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examinations. The West African Examinations Council Chief Examiners' Report (2023) indicates that there are a lot of secondary schools where students are underperforming in core subjects like English Language and Mathematics. This is worrying as it suggests a decline in academic achievement. Researchers and educators have associated various aspects to students' poor academic achievement among which inadequate study skills and school environment appear to be the most prevalent. Effective study abilities are regarded to increase learning results and include proper private time management, regular review of class notes and decent reading skills. Despite investment by the government in education, many students in public secondary schools score poorly and perform low in academic success in both science and arts core subjects. Furthermore, there are few empirical studies that have specifically identified the factors responsible for poor study skills influencing the academic performance of students of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. This creates a vacuum in understanding the interaction of behavioral and psychological factors on students' academic performance in the local school system.

The above discourse need urgent attention to address the low academic performance and achieve the academic Sustainable Development Goals 4, 3 and 10. If poor study skills is not properly addressed, students will continue to experience poor academic achievement, increase in examination malpractice, low self-esteem, high school dropout and reduced readiness for higher education and national development. It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to investigate study skills and academic performance among students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate study skills and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis. In specific terms the study attempts to achieve the following;

1. Determine the relationship between private time management and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.
2. Examine the relationship between regular class note review and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. Find out the relationship between reading skills and academic performance of students in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between private time management and the academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?
2. What is the relationship between regular class note review and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis?
3. What is the relationship between reading skills and academic performance of students in Port Harcourt Metropolis?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided this study:

1. There is no significance relationship between private time management and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.
2. There is no significance relationship between regular class note review and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.
3. There is no significant relationship between reading skills and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis.

Methodology

A correlational research strategy was used in this study to investigate the association between study skills and students' academic achievement. A correlational design is a non-experimental research design that tries to discover the existence, direction and strength of connections between variables without manipulation of the variables. Correlational research is especially intended to discover

and assess the correlations between naturally occurring variables while maintaining their original conditions (Putri, Rezani, & Hermina, 2025). This approach was judged appropriate since it enabled the researcher to explore if the study abilities were positively or negatively related to the students' academic achievement. Furthermore, the correlational design proved suited to apply Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to determine the direction and size of the associations between the variables under study.

The population of this study consisted of all the Senior Secondary School Two (SSII) and Senior Secondary School Three (SSIII) pupils in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. Rivers State Ministry of Education (2025) reported that the total number of students in the selected public secondary schools was 35,805. The survey was conducted on a sample size of 400 respondents. The researcher expanded the sample size to 400 to improve the representativeness and reliability of the findings, while the minimal sample size using the Taro Yamane formula was 396. The respondents were drawn using a stratified random sampling technique involving the proportionate selection of 200 students each from the two major Local Government Areas covered in the study, thus, ensuring adequate representation of the study population.

Data for the study were acquired by administering a structured questionnaire termed *Study Skills and Students' Academic Performance Questionnaire (SHSAPQ)* which was established by the researcher based on the relevant literature and study specific objectives. The test was in two parts. Part A collected demographic information from the respondents while Part B had 15 items that measured several characteristics of study skills and their relationship to academic success. The responses were acquired using a four-point Likert rating scale which consisted of Very High Extent (VHE=4), High Extent (HE=3), Low Extent (LE=2) and Very Low Extent (VLE=1). The questionnaire results were supplemented by use of an Academic success Checklist to offer objective measures of academic success. Objective indicators of students' academic performance were the scores derived from official school record books in core subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, Science, and Arts related subjects.

The instrument was reviewed by experts to establish face and content validity. Three experts in Educational Psychology and Guidance and Counselling, Measurement and Evaluation and Educational Psychology were used to test the clarity, relevance and adequacy of the components of the instrument in connection to the study objectives. Their views and ideas were included in the final version of the instrument.

A pilot research was carried out with 30 students from a secondary school outside the study area but have similar features with the study population to establish the reliability of the instrument. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined by using test retest approach. Reliability coefficients of; SHQ ($r=0.83$), and SAPQ ($r=0.80$) were obtained indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study.

The data was collected by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants. Before the administration of the instrument, permission was sought from the Rivers State Ministry of Education and the principals of the selected schools. The goal of the study was communicated to the respondents and they were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The questionnaires were delivered and collected soon after completion for a high response rate. All copies were collected on the same day to ensure 100% return rate.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used for all the research questions and also to test all the hypotheses.

Table 1: PPMC Analysis (r) of the Relationship between Private Time Management and Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary School in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State

Correlations			
		Private Time Management	Academic Performance
Private Time Management	Pearson Correlation	1	0.80**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00
	N	400	400
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.80**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	
	N	400	400
**. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).			

In answering research question one, Table 1 shows the extent to which private time management relate to academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result revealed that the extent to which use of private time management relates to academic performance of students is very strong ($r = 0.80$); since the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.80$) is within the range of $r \geq \pm 0.80$ to ± 1.00 .

In testing null hypothesis one, Table 1 showed the significant level of the relationship between private time management and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result revealed there is a very strong positive correlation ($r = 0.80$, $r \geq \pm 0.80$ to ± 1.00) significant relationship between private time management relate to academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt

The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 alpha level of significance. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) is a statistic that measures the strength and direction of the linear relationship between two continuous variables. According to Ogidi (2018), the meaning of r -values are; .01-.19 (Very Low Relationship), 20-.44 (Low Relationship), 45-.59 (Moderate Relationship), 60-.70 (High Relationship), 71-99 (Very High Relationship) and 1 (Perfect Relationship).

Results

Research Question 1: To what extent does private time management relate to academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between private time management relate to academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

Metropolis of Rivers State with a p -value = $0.00 < 0.05$, hence null hypothesis one is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The study indicates a substantial beneficial association between private time management and academic performance of pupils in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. This indicates that the more students engaged themselves in private reading time management, the greater their academic success.

Research Question 2: To what extent does regular class note review relate to academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between regular class note review and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

Table 2: PPMC Analysis (r) of the Relationship between Regular Class Note Review and Academic Performance in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State

Correlations			
		Regular Class Note Review	Academic Performance
Regular Class Note Review	Pearson Correlation	1	0.87**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00
	N	400	400
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.87**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	
	N	400	400
**. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).			

In answer to study question two, Table 2 indicates the level of relationship between regular review of class notes and academic achievement of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result showed that the strength of the relationship between regular class note review and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State is very strong ($r = 0.87$) as the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.87$) falls within the range of $r \geq \pm 0.80$ to ± 1.00 .

In addition, the data presented in table 2 shows the high level of the relationship between regular class note review and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The findings showed that there was a positive and very strong relationship ($r = 0.87$, $r \geq \pm 0.80$ to ± 1.00) between regular class note review and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools

in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State at $p\text{-value} = 0.00 < 0.05$, hence null hypothesis two was rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The finding means that there is a strong beneficial link between regular class note review and the academic achievement of pupils in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. This finding implies that the more diligent students are in checking their notes after classes, the better they are prepared for their class test and examinations which would culminate to increase in academic achievement.

Research Question 3: To what extent does reading skills relate to academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State?

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between reading skills and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

Table 3: PPMC Analysis (r) of the Relationship between Reading Skills and Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Metropolis of Rivers State

Correlations			
		Reading Skills	Academic Performance
Reading Skills	Pearson Correlation	1	0.82**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.00
	N	400	400
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	0.82**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00	
	N	400	400
**. Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).			

Table 3: Extent of Relationship Between Reading Skills and Academic Performance of Students in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. Hence, the response to study question four is that, the relationship that exists between reading skills and academic achievement of pupils in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State is very strong ($r = 0.82$). This finding shows that the relationship between reading skills and academic performance of students in

public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State is very high because the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.82$) is within the range of $r \leq \pm 0.80$ to ± 1.00 .

Table 3 also indicates the significant level of association between reading skills and academic achievement of pupils in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. The result showed that there is a positive and significant relationship ($r = 0.82$, $r \geq \pm 0.82$ to

± 1.00) between reading skills and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. This is based on a p -value = $0.00 < 0.05$, which means null hypothesis four is rejected at 0.05 significance level. The finding shows that there is a strong positive correlation between reading skills and academic achievement of pupils in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. This implies that the majority of students who employ good reading skills will achieve better academic performance.

Discussion of Findings

Private Time Management and Academic Performance of Students

The study studied the association between time management and academic achievement of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The results in Table 1 showed a very high positive correlation between students' time management practices and their academic achievement; that is, good management of study time is positively connected with better learning outcomes. In addition, the output of the matching hypothesis test also revealed the link to be statistically significant, showing that time management had considerable effect on students' academic progress in the subject area. These findings imply that students with good planning, organization and time allocation for their study are likely to perform better academically than those who are bad in time management practice.

The finding of this study is supported by the study Ezebuola and Wodi (2026) which revealed that effective time management had a significant positive relationship with students' academic performance. The study found that students who engaged in personal time table and good time management are very confident in writing their examinations by themselves. Furthermore, this finding is in agreement with the finding of Khan et al. (2020) which revealed that there was a strong positive relationship between good time management and higher academic performance. The study found that students with poor time management performed poorly in their examinations, and such students would want to cheat in order to pass the examination. The study concluded that both variables were associated with each other and time utilization skills affected students learning seriously.

Regular Class Note Review and Academic Performance of Students

Table 2 results revealed that there is a very strong beneficial link between the regular study of class notes and the academic achievement of pupils of public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State. Hypothesis Two showed that this relationship was also

statistically significant, meaning that students who continue to review their class notes are more likely to obtain better grades. This result is in line with the study of Okeke and Nwankwo (2021) which found a substantial beneficial link between regular practice of class notes revision and students' academic achievement. The result is in tandem with the findings of Adebayo and Adeyemi (2022) who determined that frequent examination of class notes greatly boosts students' academic progress. These convergent findings highlight the necessity of regular note review as a very effective study approach that enhances learning and knowledge retention and contributes significantly to improved academic performance.

Reading Skills and Academic Performance of Students

The result in table 4 reveals that the extent of association between reading skills and academic achievement of pupils in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State is strong. Also, the outcome of the hypothesis four examined showed that there is considerable positive association between reading skills and academic performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis of Rivers State.

The present finding is consistent with the results from the finding of Ahmed and Mohammed (2020) which revealed by the study that reading skills significantly influenced students' academic performance. This finding is also, in agreement with the finding of Ojo and Adewale (2022), who found that reading habits significantly influenced students' academic achievement.

Conclusion

This study studied the association between study skills and academic achievement of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State. The findings showed that the main dimensions of study skills, such as personal time management, regular review of notes in class, and reading skills, were very strongly and positively related to students' academic performance. The findings imply that students who manage their study time well, regularly examine their lecture notes and utilize relevant reading strategies are likely to score higher academic achievement. The findings also suggest that collaboration between teachers, parents, school administrators, and other educational stakeholders is needed to encourage good study habits by providing guidance, mentorship, and supportive learning environments that foster effective time management, systematic review of notes, and the development of good reading skills to enhance students' academic success.

The study finds that the formation and continuous practice of good study skills are vital in enhancing the academic

performance of students in public senior secondary schools in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State, based on the empirical data. A greater emphasis on personal time management, consistent review of lecture notes and the use of good reading strategies results in better prepared students for examinations, greater retention of knowledge and improved academic performance overall. Therefore, the promotion of these study abilities among secondary school students will help to promote academic excellence and improved educational outcomes in the subject field.

Implications for Educational Psychologists

The following are some implications for educational psychologists

1. There is need for educational psychologists to organize workshops on time management, note-taking, reading skills and active recall for students in the area of study. The workshop should be evidence-based study skills strategies that students can apply immediately before writing examinations.
2. Educational Psychologists and Counsellors should develop strategies that will help teachers shift the response from punishment to support. Counselling strategies such as cognitive restructuring to challenge catastrophic thoughts about exams, plus behavioural contracts to build consistent study routines should be encouraged.

Recommendations

Considering the findings, discussion and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Students should endeavour to develop good time table management for private study of their subject textbooks. In achieving this, students should allocate time to themselves for self-development, so that they can develop intellectually and effectively manage themselves during examinations. Parents can also provide a conducive home environment for private study.
2. Students should develop the attitude of regular class note review. This will enable mastery and ultimately higher academic performance.
3. Parents and teachers should help students to develop good reading skills. They should plan their reading time and do all their assignments on time to avoid late submission and failure.

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