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Title Effects of counseling on study habits, locus of control among senior secondary students in Nigeria

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EFFECTS OF COUNSELLING ON STUDY HABITS, LOCUS OF CONTROL AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS IN NIGERIA

BY

PATRICIA ORLUNWO IKIRIKO

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

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THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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Abstract

Students are expected to be analytical organisers, able to critically pattern their study for academic excellence. However the attitudes of Nigerian students towards studying and learning fall strikingly short of these expectations. Many have difficulty forming sound study habits, and tend to have an external locus of control. The term locus of control (Rotter, 1954) refers to a person's basic belief system about the influences that affect outcomes in their lives. Those with an external locus believe that forces outside of themselves affect their ability to succeed, while the most successful people tend to have an internal locus of control. Statistics show that about 80 percent of Nigerian students fail annually and that the educational career of more than one million Nigerian students is in jeopardy (Alaneme, 2010; Olugbile, 2008; Otti, 2011). Studies have found that students with an external locus of control and poor study habits experience poor academic performance and that those who fail often believe that they will not succeed again. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether those who have experienced counselling altered their negative attitudes towards studying and indicated an improvement in their study habits. Participants were 20 academic underachievers, ten male and ten female, aged 15 to 21 years, recruited from three schools in Nigeria. A mixed-methods approach was used; qualitative methods took the form of semi-structured interviews while quantitative data was collected using four widely-used questionnaires. Thematic analysis and Related T-Test were used respectively for data analysis. The findings suggest that counselling played a significant role in students' attitudinal change.

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Declaration

I, Patricia O. Ikiriko conducted the research thesis report originally, under the supervision of Dr Joseph K Adonu, Professor Andrew Guppy and Dr Alfredo Gaitan of the Department of Psychology at the University of Bedfordshire. I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. Any assertions or research represented therein that are not my own are duly acknowledged and referenced. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my loving and caring husband Hope Ikiriko, my late parents in –law Rev and Mrs Howard Ikiriko, my Late father Chief Mark Addey, my mother Mrs Agnes Addey, my grandmother Mrs Rebecca Bennett, my lovely children Doxa Chiudushime and Chanan-Christie, and my little grand daughter Sarah-Louisa Seker.

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Table of contents

	Abstract	**2**
	Declaration	**3**
	Dedication	**4**
	Acknowledgements	**5**
	List of tables	
Table 1	Stages of procedure	61
Table 2	Test of within-subject effects for before and after measures on all variables	67
Table 3	Test of between-subject effects for before and after measures on all 15 variables	68
1.0	**Chapter 1: Introduction**	**8**
1.1	Introduction	8
1.1.2	Main argument	10
1.1.3	Habits	11
1.1.4	Study habits	12
1.1.5	Test anxiety and self-efficacy	14
1.1.6	Age	15
1.1.7	Locus of control	17
1.1.8	Attitudes	19
1.2	Relevant variables	20
1.2.1	Study habits	21
1.2.2	Position of locus of control	23
1.2.3	Worldview construal	24
1.2.4	Impact of counselling	24
2.0	**Chapter 2: Literature review**	**26**
2.1	Review of literature	26
2.1.1	Defining culture	26
2.2	Culture and attitudes	26
2.2.1	Implications of culture for academic performance	27
2.3	Dimensions of culture	29
2.3.1	Individualism-Collectivism in education	29
2.3 2	Power distance in education	30
2.3.3	Masculinity-Femininity in education	30
2.3.4	Uncertainty avoidance in education	31
2.3.5	African thought system	32
2.4	Counselling as an intervention	36
2.5	The Nigerian education system	39
2.5.1	Historical overview of the Nigerian education system	40
2.6	Purpose of this research	45
2.6.1	Aims and main objectives of the study	47
2.7	Research questions	47
2.8	Research hypotheses	47
3.0	**Chapter 3: Methodology**	**49**
3.1	Introduction	49
3.1.1	Qualitative methods	50
3.1.2	Quantitative methods	51

3.1.3	Design	51
3.2	Participants	53
3.3	Ethical concerns	54
3.4	Materials	55
3.4.1	Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control Scale	57
3.4.2	Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ)	57
3.4.3	Wrenn's (1969) Study Habits Inventory (SHI)	58
3.4.4	Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F)	59
3.5	Procedure	61
3.5.1	Semi-structured interview	64
3.6	Data analysis	65
4.0	**Chapter 4 Result**	**66**
4.1	Introduction	66
4.2	Related t-test of within-subject effects	67
4.2.1	Female participants	70
4.2.2	Male participants	73
4.2.3	Summary	78
4.3	Qualitative study using thematic analysis	80
4.3.1	Coding scheme generation	82
4.3.2	In Vivo Coding	84
4.4.	Analysis of the counselling sample	85
4.4.1	Preparation of the data	85
4.4.2	Familiarisation with the data	86
4.4.3	Preliminary coding with 20 participants	87
4.4.4	Reducing the raw information	90
4.4.5	Identifying themes	92
4.5	Code Validation Reliability	92
4.6	Themes identified	93
4.6.1	Theme 1: Negative self-concept	94
4.6.2	Theme 2: Parental attitudes and family background	95
4.6.3	Theme 3: Peer pressure	97
4.6.4	Theme 4: Discouragement from relatives and neighbours	98
4.6.5	Theme 5: Institutional factors	100
5.0	**Chapter 5**	**104**
5.1	Discussion	104
5.2	Conclusion	111
5.2.1	Q1. What factors influence the position of locus of control (e.g. culture, gender and age factors)?	111
5.2.2	Q2. Is there a relationship between locus of control and study habits?	111
5.2.3	Q3. Can counselling cause a shift in position of locus of control?	112
5.2.4	Q4. What is the impact of counselling on the relationship between locus of control and study habits?	112
5.3	Limitations of the research	113
5.4	Recommendations for future work	115
	Appendices	**119**
1	Section 1	119
1a	Information sheet	119
1b	Consent letter	122

1c	Start Sheet	123
2	Section 2: Questionnaires	124
2a	Locus of Control Scale (Rotter)	124
2b	Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F)	127
2c	The Study Habits Inventory	131
2d	Study Habits Questionnaire	138
3	Section 3	139
3a	Detailed description of the introductory group session	139
4	Section 4	144
4a	Study Habits and Locus of Control Interview Protocol	144
4b	Coding Schemes (Identified Themes)	147
5	Section 5	151
5a	Patricia Ikiriko's Proposed Technique Of Studying: B.R.E.A.K.S.	151
	References	**163**
	Declaration	**197**

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

The Nigerian education system has been transformed over the past five decades (Agboola, 2001) in order to institute a system that is relevant to the nation and international community, aimed at instilling self-reliance in individuals who can contribute meaningfully to the national and international economy (Fafunwa, 1991). However, research has shown that the educational career of more than one million Nigerian students is in jeopardy (Aboderin, 1985; Agina-Obu & Amakiri, 2011; Jegede & Jegede 1997; Otti, 2011). Statistics show that about 80 percent of students fail annually. The West African Examination Council announced that 83 percent of candidates failed the Senior Secondary Examination of May/June 2008 (Olugbile 2008). Similarly, the 2009 June-July Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) of the National Examination Council (NECO) revealed that some 89 percent of the 1.2 million candidates who registered for the examination failed (Alaneme, 2010). A Situation Analysis report of girls' performance in Science, Technology and Mathematics at all levels by the Federal Ministry of Education in Abuja, the capital city of Nigeria, in 2005 found that students' attitudes towards studying and learning conditions in schools were alarming (Primary Education Analysis Final Report, 2006). In addition, cultural factors may affect how students understand their poor academic performance and perceived perception associated with their beliefs (McMahon & Watts, 2002; Pajares & Miller, 1994). Researches support that culture, family and even historical factors are perhaps the most influential socialising agents for cultivating the child's attitudes, values and overall sense of self (Bennett & Daniel 2006;

Boykin & Toms, 1985; Demo & Hughes, 1990). Apart from attitudes, Aladejana and Aderibigbe (2007) found that the learning environment affects students' study habits and academic performance in Science. Other studies found that most students who left secondary school to pursue a university education did not have the ability to carry out the academic challenges due to poor study habits, and they continued to perform poorly (Jegede & Jegede 1997b).

1.1.2 Main argument

Much of the research in the fields of education and psychology is concerned with identifying factors influencing the academic success of school- and college-age students. Three factors believed to be related to school adjustment are: test anxiety, study habit skills, and locus of control (Aremu, 2000, 2002; Asikhia, 2010; Dykeman, 1993; Uwaifo, 2008). The best predictors of academic performance have been found to be study habits and locus of control (Miller, Short, Garland & Clark 2010; Moor-Thomas, Day-Vines & Holcomb-McCoy, 2011; Niles, 2006; Perren, Godfrey & Rowland, 2009), where 'locus of control' refers to an individual's perception of the underlying main causes of events in his or her life (Rotter, 1966). These key elements underpinning students' educational achievement represent a primary concern for teachers, parents and governments who have a vested interest in the educational development and legal rights of persons in education (Abdullahi, 2010; Igun & Adogbeji, 2009; Salami, 2008). A further line of inquiry concerns the impact of these two constructs – study habits and locus of control – on the educational well-being of young people (Asonibare &

Olayonu, 1997; Lefcourt, 1982; Okwilagwe, 2001; Rotter, 1954). Researchers have begun to study interactions between study habits, locus of control and various educational outcomes, as well as the factors connecting them, such as counselling (Ayoka, 2012; Fakeye, 2011; Rossier, Dahourou & McCrae, 2005; Ryan, 2007). First habits in general are discussed before focusing on study habits in particular.

1.1.3 Habits

Habits refer to those repetitive behaviours of an individual that are performed automatically, that is, without conscious intention, thought or effort (Covey, 1998; Danner, Aarts, Papies & DeVries, 2011). Human habits are developed when the individual consistently performs or practices a particular task to attain a result, for example, learning to ride a bicycle (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2000a). As an individual gains more experience over time, behaviour shifts from consciously driven towards habitual behaviour (Limayem, Hirt & Chin, 2001). As individual gains more experience over time, behaviour shifts from consciously driven towards habitual behaviour, and the automatic nature of habitual behaviour makes it useful for the improvement of study habits and academic performance (Glaveanu, 2012; Limayem, Hirt & Chin, 2001). On the other hand, certain habits may prevent learning from taking place (Slusarz & Terry, 2005). This is because repeated behaviours become ingrained in the procedural memory and involve both cognitive and motor skills (Neal, Wood & Quinn, 2006). The cognitive processing that initiates the response becomes automatic (Ouellette & Wood, 1998) and consequently the individual is not conscious when enacting it (Triandis, 1980). While it might be possible to

shape individuals' intentions during the early adoption stages of a particular behaviour, later on, the same strategies will not have the same effect since it is not so much intentions as habits that 'govern' a person's behaviour (Limayem, Hirt & Chin, 2001, p. 283). Ajzen (1991) notes that an individual's past behaviour contributes to future habits, and that both habits and attitudes should be taken into account when explaining attitudes that form the behaviour.

1.1.4 Study habits

The concept of study habits (SH) is often referred to as a fundamental tool that can help students to improve their learning and performance (Cottrell, 2001). For example, Bailey and Onwuegbuzie (2002) found that foreign language students who use effective study habits recorded higher academic performance than those with poor study habits, suggesting that the use of study habits is strongly related to academic achievement. Effective study habits are described as a prerequisite for putting students on a path of educational success; the mantra that permeates much of the educational process is that effective study habits are consistently related to good academic performance (Hurley, 1994). Igun and Adogbeji (2007) argued that effective study habits are the essential key that helps students to master the concepts being studied. They are the systematically patterned goal-oriented or results-determined behaviours that students willingly and consistently adopt in their studies with a view to attaining academic success. SH is also seen as a strategic study schedule or the series of constructive study activities embarked upon by students with a view to ensuring learning effectiveness and

enhancing academic performance (Nneji, 1998; Yahaya, 2003). Current conceptions also emphasise SH as a knowledge-construction process, a dedicated schedule comprising uninterrupted time to study and learn and attain the aims of studying. As Adeboye (2011) puts it, when you read, you skim the surface but when you study, you discover the treasure within the context of studying. Meaningful studying is a cognitive, meta-cognitive and affective activity which is characterised by the learner's active, cumulative, goal-oriented, and self-regulated behaviour (Shuell, 1993). Importantly, the student's attitudes and perceptions are thought to dominate the outcome of the process (Lau & Woods, 2008). Thus, the outcome of SH can be more effective or less effective. Shuell (1993) argues that students do not merely 'take in' the materials to be learnt, but rather select information on the basis of their pre-existing knowledge and interpret the received information in an attitudinally perceived manner. The attitude of developing good study skills may include carefully reviewing work after lectures, taking proper notes in class, and revising before each lecture (Igun & Adogbeji, 2007; Nneji, 1998).

Recent research has found that many secondary students in Nigeria have poor study habits (see Agina-Obu, Amakiri & Emesiobi, 2011). The retarded educational performance of many students has been attributed to inappropriate study habits (Agnew, Slate, Jones & Agnew, 1993; Entwistle et al., 1989; Salami & Aremu, 2006). A relationship between SH and academic achievement has been found at secondary school level (Jones et al., 1991, 1992; Slate et al., 1993, in Bailey & Onwuegbuzie, 2002). For example, Agina-Obu and Amakiri (2011) found that 96 percent of secondary school

students who achieved less than a C grade reported that they were unaware of the necessary SH skills.

1.1.5 Test anxiety and self-efficacy

In addition to poor SH, poor academic performance has also been attributed to high test anxiety (see Raju & Asfaw, 2009). Those students with poor academic performance tend to have negative beliefs about their ability to do well in their studies. This in turn leads to test anxiety. It has been found that students who fail their examinations tend to hold misconceptions and negative beliefs about the possibility of attaining good results in the future (Asonibare & Olayonu, 1997). Various studies (e.g. Bandura, 1978, 1986, 1997; Chemers, Hu & Garcia, 2001) support the finding that negative self-efficacy can have deleterious effects on students' academic performance; poor self-efficacy can in turn result in a negative self-concept. Self-concept is the overall sum of information about the self which an individual has processed and systematically stored (Bremner et al, 1985, in Raju & Asfaw, 2009). Meinhold & Malkus (2005) clarified that self-efficacy is important because of its close relationship to self-esteem, locus of control and pro-social development, and understanding self-efficacy will help researcher to understand student's behaviour and attitudes towards study habits and locus of control.

To provide operative intervention to improve academic performance, in terms of both study habits and locus of control, it is necessary for research to explore moderating effects (Pajares & Miller, 1994; Pajares, Miller, & Johnson, 1999). Age and culture are two independent variables that have been found to

influence self-efficacy and academic performance (Pajares & Kransler, 1995). Age is discussed next, while culture is discussed in Chapter 2, after the concept of worldview has been introduced.

1.1.6 Age

Because a student's perspective of situations changes over time, the onset of poor academic performance in school is usually gradual, and based on incremental changes in the student's affect, behaviour and cognitions (Dryden & Scott, 1990). Adolescence is a critical developmental period marked by instability and complexity (Horn, 1978, in Slater & Bremner, 2007). Apart from physical appearance, adolescent developmental changes affect mood, individual perception and evaluation, cognitive and affective abilities and behaviour (Slater & Bremner, 2007). This developmental stage structures the way in which individuals interpret their experiences, and organises the way in which they perceive and interact intellectually (Gilleard and Higgs, 2000; Sugerman, 2012). Due to this instability, care needs to be applied towards issues of intellectual development at this stage.

Cognitive ability is strongly related to age (Goleman, 1998). Developmental changes have an effect on student cognitive ability and functioning, including processing self-information (Kennedy & Tay, 1994; Marsh, 1998), which may in turn affect academic performance (Ebenuwa-Okoh, 2011). Fagan and Singer (1983) found that adolescents' general intellectual abilities tend to be more unstable at younger ages than in later years. While an adolescent's intelligence quotient (IQ) score is relatively stable and does not change greatly

with age, they may develop significantly on a number of specific dimensions of intelligence (Slater & Bremner, 2007).

Harter (1983, 1985, in Marsh, 1998) proposes that self-concept becomes increasingly abstract with age, shifting from concrete descriptions of behaviour in early childhood, to trait-like psychological constructs in middle childhood, to more abstract constructs during adolescence. Relatedly, emotional intelligence tends to mature with increased exposure to experiences (Goleman, 1995, in Shipley, Jackson & Segrest, 2010). Emotional intelligence refers to an individual's ability to monitor their feelings and emotions and that of others, and to use the information to guide their thinking and actions (Mayer, DiPaolo & Salovey, 1990). The sudden and rapid changes at this developmental stage can cause confusion and anxiety which in turn influence adolescents' actions and attitudes. It is widely recognised that cognition and affect interact to affect thinking and individual behaviour (e.g. Bower, 1981; Isen, Shalker, Clark & Karp, 1978; Zajonc, 1980, in Brackett, Rivers & Salovey, 2011). Smith (1992) hypothesised a difference in attitudinal behaviour between early adolescence and those who are two years older (seventh and ninth grades), which is attributable to students' academic development. The intra- and inter-personal personality trait variations of this age also affect students' beliefs and behaviour (Mavroveli & Sanchez-Ruiz, 2011). Thus, students' abilities to cope with academic performance are affected by these developmental challenges. To enable students to cope better with academic demands, counselling can used be used to help them to acquire the necessary study skills (Akhurst, 2005; Dryden & Woolfe, 1996,

Hough, 2004; Mearns & Thorne, 2010; Milne, 2003).

Studies correlating student attitudes with learning found that student attitudes and beliefs play a leading role in academic performance (Adams, Finkelstein, Perkins, Pollock & Wieman, 2005). The most common behaviours that are 'cemented' by experiences of failure seem to provide proof that these negative beliefs are true (Wilding & Milne, 2010). The self-conceptualised beliefs that individuals develop about themselves are posited to develop through dynamic cultural interaction between their objective and subjective responses to their environment (Bandura, 1996). Dryden and Scott (1996) explained the subjective formation of beliefs from a cognitive behavioural perspective. They view human experience as a product of four interacting elements: physiology (event); cognition (perception); behaviour (interpretation); and emotion (action taken). It is essential to understand student's attitudes, and for understanding the subjective nature of interpretation of life events, Rotter (1954) developed the concept of 'Locus of Control' (LOC).

1.1.7 Locus of control

Rotter's (1954) theory of learning provides a unique understanding of the way in which an individual's attitudinal interpretations are constructed. He explained locus of control as an individual's beliefs about the extent to which they can control or influence their life events. Rotter's conceptualisation views locus of control as unidimensional in that he characterised it as internal and external, equating internal to good and external to bad (Anderson, Hattie & Hamilton, 2005; Findley & Cooper, 1983; Lefcourt, 1976; Phares, 1976, 1979).

Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that they have the power to influence their own life situations and take responsibility when they fail, while those with external locus of control attribute the causes of events to external forces, whether powerful others, fate or chance, or environmental factors. Applying this to students, those who believe that the results of their examinations are due to their own effort and ability are said to have an internal LOC; whereas those who believe that their grades are caused by powerful others, bad luck, bewitchment from evil neighbours, the test structure, or faults of the teacher are said to be have an external LOC.. Park and Kim (1998) contend that people who have an external LOC tend to be unaware of their own negative attitudes and outcomes; instead they generally believe that their rewards and punishments are the result of external forces. An external LOC is perceived to be negative compared to an internal LOC in that those with an external LOC tend to have a poor self-concept and low self-efficacy. Perceiving themselves as incompetent or incapable of achieving anything good, they are less likely to make an effort to improve their academic performance. These students hold the belief that what causes their failure is beyond their control and unpredictable. They are more likely to blame others, attribute their failure to circumstances, and avoid taking personal responsibility for the outcome. It has been argued that LOC is one of the most influential factors related to study habits and academic performance (Findley & Cooper, 1983; Smith, 2003). Above it was mentioned that both habits and attitudes should be taken into account when explaining behaviour. The following section addresses attitudes.

1.1.8 Attitudes

Various studies (e.g. Credes & Kuncel, 2003; Entwistle, 1998; Jansen & Bruinsma, 2005) found attitudes towards learning and students' perceived control over learning as one of the main predictor of academic achievement. Attitudes refer to favourable or unfavourable evaluations of particular people, objects, events or ideas (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998). 'Attitude' is a multifaceted and complex psychological construct, comprising affective, behavioural, and cognitive dimensions – often referred to as the 'ABC model' (Crites, Fabrigar & Petty, 1994). An individual's response to an object or situation and their interpretation of events is thought to be influenced less by the event itself than by the individual's attitudes and beliefs, which possess positive or negative aspects (Allport, 1954; Hogg & Vaughan, 2008; Schommer, Duell & Hutter, 2005; Schommer & Hutter, 2002) and which form an individual's characteristics (Ajzen, 2005; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1972). The ABC theoretical framework provides a way of understanding individuals through the feelings and evaluations (affect), interpretations (behaviours) and beliefs (cognitions) that are thought to cause their reactions (Wolfe, 2007, in Corey, 2009). These facets have been identified as personal characteristics unique to each learner (Riding & Rayner, 2009), while the overt and covert nature of behavioural responses highlights the fact that an individual's evaluative processes are complex and multifaceted (Cunningham, Zelazo, Packer & Bavel, 2007; Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

Behavioural therapists have become increasingly concerned with cognitive processes, and more recently with the influence of affective processes

(Pervin, Cervone & John, 2005). These components are seen to pertain to personality, rather than situational, variables. They reflect an innate predisposition which has a generalising and consistent influence on evaluation responses (judgements) (Hogg & Vaughan, 2008). For example, if two people are placed in the exact same situation, their perception of the event and ability to interpret the situation may vary significantly (Miller, 2005). Similarly Rotter (1954) notes that people vary in their interpretations of the same situation. He argues that they use their life experiences to build beliefs, values, and attributions, all of which impact on the behaviour they exhibit in different situations and their expectancy about certain outcomes, such as their interpretation of their educational outcome. It is clear that attitudes towards education, or approaches to learning, will directly and indirectly influence the cognitive processes and academic performance of learners (Entwistle, 1998)

1.2 Relevant variables

In order to contextualise this study, it is necessary to discuss a range of psychological and educational variables which may influence approaches to studying, and the study habits of senior secondary students in general, and those of Nigerian students, in particular. Cognitive theory and social learning theory stress the central role of cognitive processes in learning (e.g. Bandura 1997, 2001; Bandura & Bussey, 1999; Edgar & Pike, 2005; Ellis & Blau, 1998; Miller & Dollard, 1941; Pajares, 1996; Wolfe, 2007) and focuses on understanding the psychology of the individual and their internal life as determinants of behaviour, and maintains that human attitudes are inherent from internal psychological dispositions. However, numerous researchers

argue that individual attitudes are a function of the interaction between the individual and their social context (e.g. Kauffman & New; Lago & Smith, 2010; Pilgrim, 1997; Proctor; Robb, 2007; Samuels, 1993; Smail, 2005, cited in Feltham & Horton, 2012).

As established by these theories, the components of cognition are accounted for by a range of psycho-social variables such as: self-efficacy, beliefs, values, self-esteem, test anxiety, negative self-concept, worldview, attitudes and attributions. For this study, the selected variables must be statistically measurable for reliability and accuracy of the findings. Accordingly, the following variables were chosen to represent the dependent and independent variables in this study:

- Study habits (dependent variable)
- Position of locus of control (dependent variable)
- Counselling (independent variable)

Each of these constructs will be reviewed in turn.

1.2.1 Study habits

The attitudes of students towards their studies can be measured in terms of the strengths and weaknesses of their study habits (Chao, 2012; Hurlburt, Gade & McLaughlin, 1990). To explore the study habits of Nigerian students, three different questionnaires were selected.

(i) Study Habits Questionnaire (to measure study skills)

(ii) Wrenn's Study Habits Inventory (to measure attitudes to studying)

(iii) Revised Study Process Questionnaire (to measure study approaches)

Note: Questionnaires (i) and (ii) measure the same construct with a slight difference of focus as will be explained below.

The study skills and habits employed by students were measured using the Study Habits Questionnaire, adapted from Virginia Gordon's 'University Survey: A Guidebook and Readings for New Students' for the purposes of ascertaining those areas in which students struggle with their studying processes.

The practice of how best to study to maximise study effort is an important step that enables students to adequately prepare to learn and achieve study objectives. The Study Habits Inventory of Wrenn (1969) is a widely used as a measure of students' study attitudes (Crede & Kuncel, 2008; Houston, 1987; Sherman, 1991). This questionnaire was selected for this study to explore the theoretical position that taking an active role in studying requires sustained, focused attention and motivation to rehearse information through different modalities of learning. The questionnaire can reveal elements of study attitudes, procedural practices and study behaviours (visual, audio, reading and writing). Studying student attitudes towards studying is necessary for establishing the processes and practices that enhance student ability. It also enables exploration of the beliefs and values which influence their study habits and academic performance.

Constituting one of the most widely studied variables in educational research (Zeegers, 2001), 'study process' was another pertinent variable in this study. To study it, the 20-item instrument Revised Study Process Questionnaire (Biggs, Kember & Leung, 2001) was used. This consists of statements such as: (a) "My aim is to pass the course while doing as little work as possible", (b) "I find I can get by in most assessments by memorising key sections rather than trying to understand them", (c) "I generally restrict my study to what is specifically set as I think it is unnecessary to do anything extra". This was used to evaluate student approaches to learning and their learning style, and to assess deep and surface approaches to studying. The questionnaire has a Cronbach's alpha (to measure the internal consistency or reliability of a psychometric test) which is considered to be acceptable (Wong, Lin, & Watkins, 1996; Biggs & Kirby, 1984).

To measure beliefs and attitudes, a single questionnaire was selected, namely the Locus of control Scale.

1.2.2 Position of locus of control

'Locus of control' refers to the extent to which individuals believe that they can control the events that affect them. Individuals with a high internal locus of control believe that events result primarily from their own behaviour and actions. In contrast, those with a high external locus of control believe that powerful others, fate, or chance primarily determine events. In the 21st century, this is one of the most widely researched variables in social learning theory (Bender, 1995; Findley & Cooper, 1983; Lefcourt, 1966, Niles1981;

Rotter, 1954). Rotter's (1954) Locus of Control Scale was used to measure the beliefs and attitudes of the student participants in this study. The instrument has a reliability coefficient alpha of 0.82 (Akinsola, 2008).

1.2.3 Worldview construal

One of the major predictors of study habits and locus of control is the worldview of individual participants. A worldview construal is how individuals perceive, comprehend, interpret the world around them and set of assumptions about physical and social reality that may have powerful effects on cognition and behaviour (Katz, 1985; Koltko-Rivera, 2004; Ingrid, 2009; Sue & Sue, 2008). A self-worldview construal is the basic cognitive orientation of an individual which determines their level of understanding and perceptions. A commonly used method of qualitative researchers for accessing self-worldview is through semi-structured interviews. Qualitative enquiry seeks to investigate the life experiences of individuals to achieve an in-depth understanding of their perspectives (Chassman, Kottler & Madison, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Smith, 2007). Empirically, self-construal was measured in this study using a qualitative research method known as thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Corbin & Strauss, 1998; Saldana, 2011; Silverman, 2007).

1.2.4 Impact of counselling

The main treatment (independent) variable in this study is a counselling intervention, comprising both individual counselling, to obtain an

understanding of self-worldview as described above, and group counselling, to educate students about effective study habits.

The following chapter reviews the influence of cultural factors on attitudes, followed by the implications of culture for academic performance. First, the various definitions of culture are reviewed.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Review of literature

The focus of this chapter is on the cultural aspects of education. It concludes with a review of the Nigerian education system.

2.1.1 Culture

Cultural socialisation practice is conceivably the most influential means for cultivating individual's values, beliefs and overall formation of attitudes and behaviours (Bennett, 2006, Woods & Jagers, 2003).

2.2 Culture and attitudes

Proposed by Anderson (1981), Information Integration Theory models how a person integrates information from a number of sources in order to make an overall judgment. Similarly, attitudes are widely thought to be the outcome of a number of factors, including generic cultural, cognitive and interpersonal processes that are influenced by the social context (e.g. Anderson, 1971, 1981; Berry et al., 2006; Cottrell, 2003; Hofstede, 2001; Hogg & Vaughan, 2008; Matsumoto, Weissman, Preston, Brown & Kupperbusch, 1997; Mischel, Shoda & Smith, 2003; Triandis, 1995). The relationship between attitudes and culture has been found at different levels of human interaction, with different cultures having different construals of the self and others, and these interpretations in many cases determine experiences, overt behaviour, cognitions (reasoning, thinking and subjective concepts), perceptions, emotions, attitude formation, values, moral development and actions (Cross &

Markus, 1999; Imhof & Janusik, 2006; Triandis, 1989). Anthropologists and psychologists hold that cultural heritage differentiates a given people's cultural meanings (Nsamenang, 2008), while Keller and Otto (2009) found that in every culture, child-rearing practices incorporate the fundamental values and ideas that form the child and his or her worldview. Matsumoto (2006) elaborates that many mental and behavioural processes are culture-specific, since different cultures develop different ways of dealing with situations in their own context that affect attitudes. Hofstede (2011) concurs that attitudes and values are formed differently depending on the underlying culture, and that people carry cognitive schemas that are developed in the family in early childhood and reinforced in school and in other organisations. Nile (2010) found that the cultural values and belief systems of individuals influence their perceptions of the meaning of work.

2.2.1 Implications of culture for academic performance

Within educational settings, the concept of culture is not without controversy, with sociologists, psychologists, educationists, and anthropologists often holding different perspectives on what culture means in different societies. For the purposes of the present study, a social psychological perspective has been adopted for conceptualising culture (Cross & Markus, 1999), with the overall aim of achieving an in-depth understanding of how the cultural orientation of African senior secondary students in Nigeria influences their behaviour, perceptions and attitudes towards studying and learning.

The effect of cultural background on students' ability to learn has been widely

reported (e.g. Biggs, 1991, 1999; Jones, 2002; Kember & Gow, 1990; Marton, Dall' Alba & Beaty, 1993, in Imhof & Janusik, 2006). People's cultural beliefs and values shape personality traits which are treated as causal factors in explaining different behavioural tendencies, alterations of behaviour, understanding of learning, interpretation of concepts, and perceptions of the acceptability of educational interventions (Hunsinger, Jose, Liaw & Ching, 1997; Stevenson & Stigler, 1992; Yuill, 1992). At school, students bring their own customs, culture and language into interactions, thereby increasing the cultural diversity of the school population. Individuals make sense of their self-concept through the cultural context in which they find themselves (Kashima et al., 2004).

In the education system, academic performance can be supported and improved by the use of scientific technology, yet the attitudes and behaviours of the surrounding culture may constitute a barrier to improving academic performance (Feltham & Horton, 2012; Hofstede, 2001). Insight on the part of teachers and researchers is needed to accurately interpret students' cultural meanings and evaluate their academic ability (Kashima et al., 2004). Moreover, recognition of how culture influences people's cognitive functioning, perception, behaviour, and practices in a multicultural background is needed to develop students' creativity and plan for a better educational result (Parrott, 2009; Razak, Darmanwan & Keeves, 2010; Singelis & Brown, 1995). Similarly, Parekh (2000) argues that the basic principle of working with different individuals is the need to understand their cultural context in order to help them achieve their desired goals in life. Based on this literature, an

assumption underpinning the present study is that the relationship between an individual's worldview, including their perceptions of their situation and their cognitions, are profoundly influenced by their cultural background.

2.3. Dimensions of culture

Hofstede's (2001) dimensional model of culture identifies traits that distinguish the attitudes and behaviours of different societies, both national and regional groupings. His five cultural dimensions are: (1) individualism-collectivism; (2) power distance; (3) masculinity- femininity; (4) uncertainty avoidance; and (5) time orientation (long and short term). These characteristics are used to describe, explain, and predict international differences in attitudes, values, behaviour, cognition, communication, attribution, socialisation and self-concept. They affect perceptions of the self both collectively and individually. It should be noted that all nations are comprised of some cultural diversity; failure to recognise these traits or to consider cultural variations within each country may result in negative effects on psycho-social well-being (Fiske, 2002; Matsumoto, Kudoh & Takeuchi, 1996; Morales, Gaviria, Molero, Arias & Paez, 2000). Triandis (2004) identifies individualism-collectivism as the most important distinct trait that influences attitudes and behaviour. In the present study, given its links with internal and external locus of control, the individualism-collectivism dimension is most relevant, although the other dimensions will be reviewed briefly in order to contextualise the Nigerian education system which forms the focus of this study.

2.3. 1 Individualism-collectivism in education

The education system of collectivist and individualist cultures varies according to different underlying values. The relationship between the individual and the group is established during the early formative years within the family, and this development is reinforced behaviourally at the cultural group and school levels (Hofstede, 2001). Komba (1998) found that the collectivist education system that characterises traditional indigenous African education systems trains its youth through rites, rituals and initiations at various developmental stages. For individualists, diplomas and degrees can increase economic worth and self-respect, whereas for collectivists, academic qualifications may be a method of achieving honour and entry into higher-status groups (Hofstede, 2001).

2.3.2 Power distance in education

Power in this context refers to that between superiors and subordinates, based on such differentials as social status and wealth. In a culture in which power distance is low, young people's voices are heard and they tend to take decisions on their own, whereas when power distance is high, cultural rules tend to be followed dogmatically.

2.3.3 Masculinity-femininity in education

Hofstede uses this characteristic to describe the roles of males and females in cultural settings. In traditional societies, the division of gender roles is relatively fixed. Women are expected to take only the role of motherhood and not get involved in educational affairs and public responsibilities, while the men are in charge of business and public affairs, the home and all decision-making. Less traditional societies are characterised by more flexible gender

roles. Women are educated and are allowed to take up public roles. In 'high masculine' education systems, individuals are highly motivated for goal achievement and failure is considered a disaster (Hofstede, 1998). This cultural pattern influences people to work harder towards their desired goals and vision in life. In 'low masculine' or feminine systems, relationships are valued over individual achievement and failing is considered a minor incident.

2.3.4 Uncertainty avoidance in education

This dimension shows the extent to which the members of a society deal with the risk of unstructured situations in the present and future. In strong avoidance cultures, rules, regulation and laws are in place to maximise security for its citizens. Strong uncertainty avoidance societies, like Japan and Germany, encourage systemic planning, and strive for equilibrium and assured outcomes. Because the future remains essentially unpredictable, they create security and focused planning as a way of dealing with or avoiding risks of future failure. In such societies children learn to deal with situations positively and in a realistic and meaningful manner. However, in other strong avoidance societies, students may be promoted to the next level in school, for example, regardless of their performance on assessed tasks. This tends to foster a lack of concern in students about their educational attainment. Hofstede (2001) points out that there are more critical attitudes towards younger people and a larger generation gap in high uncertainty avoidance cultures than in low uncertainty avoidance cultures. In low or weak avoidance cultures, risk-taking is encouraged and students tend to work hard to achieve good grades in order to proceed to the next level. Uncertainty tends is be

approached with a measure of acceptance, risks are taken more lightly, and tolerance of behavioural and attitudinal differences is relatively high because people do not feel threatened by such differences.

Any move towards understanding the study habits and locus of control of the African student will arguably enable teachers and counsellors to develop appropriate methods for enhancing student attitudes towards studying. This study will therefore start by identifying the historical and cultural influences that have shaped the behaviour of Nigerian students and have an impact on the perceptual processes of the individual.

2.3.5 African thought system

A thought system refers to a people's unique way of reasoning and perceiving reality (Ahiauzu, 1999). African thought systems (ATS) refer to the rationality of African belief systems within the framework of their worldviews, perceptions and cultural practices. ATS inculcate in every child an awareness of history and traditional customs, providing them with a sense of cultural identity, about certain experiences in the society and their causes, that is different from the European personality (Ali, 2008). Each ethnic group in Africa has its own unique history and values which determine their interpretation of certain phenomena and indicates a sense of identification (Chao, 2012). Some commonalities may, however, be identified among different ATS.

Many ATS about certain circumstances that occur are rooted in superstition and beliefs for which no scientific evidence exists. Nwankwo (2003) explains

that the African system accords recognition and importance to gods, deities, demons, evil spirits and evil men and women as sources of human progress or failure, therefore every good or bad incident is seen as the work of a devil or a deity. This belief system in gods as supernatural beings that govern and control the affairs of humans is transmitted from generation to generation in African societies including Nigeria. A brilliant student is viewed to be favoured by the gods while a dull student is seen to be disliked or cursed by the gods. It is also a significant feature of ATS to accuse an innocent person of being responsible for one's own failure, which represents an external locus of control.

Johada (1968) and Abimbola (1977), who studied African superstitions and magical beliefs, argue that African children's attitudes, thought patterns and perceptions affect their educational performance. Nwankwo (2003) found that the locus of control of Nigerian secondary students regarding the causes of their poor academic performance is primarily external; they point accusing fingers at the teachers and at the gods and deities. It does not occur to them that their lack of proper study habits has resulted in their failure; they deny the existence of other causes of their low level of achievement.

Rooted in the ATS is a form of traditional guidance and counselling to help traditional indigenes with their problems, thoughts and perceptions in line with the traditional belief system. This service is provided by traditional priests, clergymen, herbalists, traditional medicine men, fortune-tellers, and experienced men and women believed to be endowed with healing powers

and divination. Some parents and students patronise these mediums to solve their educational problems and improve their poor academic performance (Unachukwu & Igborgbor, 1991). Apart from educational issues, these mediums may also offer help in the areas of vocation and personal social issues. The 6-3-3-4 system of education came into being in Nigeria in 1983 while in 2009 a new system of education called the Universal Basic Education, known as the 9-3-4, was re-introduced to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2020, with these new systems, formal guidance and counselling is still being gradually introduced into the school system (Uwaifo & Uddini, 2009; Fafunwa, 1991).

It may be concluded from these studies that the study attitudes and behaviour of African students are in many ways different from those of their counterparts in the more advance educational systems, in other parts of the world. Every society has different ways of accomplishing their goals and aspirations and attaining a meaningfully organised society. This suggests that we do not perceive the world directly; rather, our knowledge of reality and reactions to social phenomena are conditioned by certain *a priori* elements – the categories and forms of intuition, such as time and space – that are products of the mind (Ahiauzu, 1999). Cole & Gay, (1972) contend that it is less the reasoning and thought processes of different people in different cultures that differ, but the values, beliefs and ways of classifying phenomena that differ. Ideas, beliefs and actions should therefore be understood from within the societal norms from which they derive (Ahiauzu, 1999; Hanson, 1975; Nsamenang, 2008). Because a society's behaviours cannot be fully

understood unless one knows its systems of thought, it is necessary to trace the behaviour manifestation of an individual back to a particular system of thought and culture (Otite, 1978). The prevalence of superstitious and traditional magical beliefs among most Africans societies, including Nigeria, has been described as an inhibiting and constraining force against analytic perception and rational thinking (Jahoda, 1970) and hence against students' academic performance (Asonibare, 1985). Markus (2003) infers that individual variations in behaviour are dependent on the cultural background, including national origin and social class. It follows that study habits (behaviour) and locus of control (attitude) should be understood within the context of the individual's beliefs and thought systems.

The cognitions and perceptions of young students shape their responses and actions which in turn affect their behaviour regarding study habits. Individual interaction processes involve learning from the cultural setting, and the experiences acquired from interaction determines how the individual feels and behaves. Rogoff, (1990, 2003) conceded that any 'faulty' learning can potentially be resolved by teaching individuals to change the undesirable behaviour to achieve a more positive result. Such change is possible because attitudinal traits are not innate but are rather learnt behaviour from social interactions and association with peer groups, the cultural environment, family, and other organisations in their surroundings. In addition, the counselling process can enhance the actualising opportunities of individuals, enabling them to develop awareness of their situations, experiences, environmental factors, and worldview and live in a more resourceful and fulfilling way

(Christine & Milne, 2008; Milne, 2006). Aligned with the new system of education called the 9-3-4 introduced 2009, which was divided into three sub-sectors: basic (nine years), post-basic/senior secondary (three years), and tertiary (four) (Uwaifo & Uddini, 2009), this study uses a formal counselling method, as opposed to traditional guidance counselling, to investigate whether students who have experienced counselling (both individual and group counselling) alter their negative attitudes towards studying, as indicated by an improvement in their study habits.

2. 4. Counselling as an intervention

The counselling intervention is thought to help individuals to explore and access their own thoughts, and deconstruct their thinking patterns (interpretation, attitudes and beliefs), deciding what works and what does not, and then construct more productive ways of thinking to enhance educational performance. Rogers, (1951) argued that it is the individual who knows their issues, and who in turn, will discover the way forward. The counselling process can help individuals to clarify and gain a better understanding of their attitudes, and to learn how to attain their self-determined goals through meaningful and well-informed choices and a sense of purpose, self-worth, and self-responsibility. In a Nigerian study, Jegede and Jegede (1997) concluded that treating study habits alone does not affect participants' performance in English; they found that those who received counselling performed significantly better.

Counselling has been found to be suitable for facilitating normal psycho-social

functioning in adolescent age groups. Given the rapidly changing psychological, cognitive and sensory capacities at each developmental stage of adolescence, there is a need to be sensitive to the individual's level of perceptive and emotional maturity (Sugarman, 2012, in Feltham & Horton, 2012). Coman, Evans and Burrow (2003) argue that counselling gives the individual the opportunity to review their thoughts and behaviours with a view to identifying any aspects that prevent them from achieving their desired goals. Bennett (1993, p. 34) defines counselling as a form of "helping relationship which actively encourages the person being counselled to identify their own solutions to particular problems". Similarly Rogers (1986) maintains that learning occurs by reflecting on one's experiences to construct a fuller understanding of concepts. Rogers further contends that individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-development, and the capacity to modify their attitudes and behaviours if properly guided (Mearns & Thorne, 2010). The counselling process recognises an individual's uniqueness, dignity, value, respect and seeing each individual as worthy of self-knowledge and self-development (Ellis, 1996). In one study, students who had difficulties with flexible learning at school were given personal counselling and guidance which improved their understanding of their study concepts (see Bulmer & Moss, 1997). This is consistent with a recent study by McKenzie, Murray, Prior and Stark (2011) which found that, after counselling, many participants reported that the counselling services that they received in the school were helpful and that it was a good opportunity to talk to someone who was trustworthy, non-judgemental, supportive and respectful of their views. They conclude that, after counselling, participants coped better at school, developed

appropriate means of self-expression, and improved their self-confidence. Relatedly, Cooper's (2009) review of 30 evaluations of school counselling services found a significant change in students' academic performance.

In education, students are expected to critically and analytical pattern their study habits for academic excellence, however, the school system often segregates students experiencing academic, behavioural or emotional difficulties into special classrooms. These alternative settings often spend more times on instructions and/or behaviour management, than on training in critical and analytical thinking. Many of these alternative programmes fail to address students' basic social skills and coping skill deficits in adjusting to good study habits (Hayes, 2001).

The theoretical framework applied within the counselling process was Cognitive Behavioural Therapy techniques (CBT) (Dryden, 2007; Ellis, 1994, Rogers, 1961, Perls, 1969; Wolfe, 2007). CBT uses the principles and techniques of counselling, such as empathy, acceptance, listening and genuineness (Bachelor & Horvath, 1999), as a strategic means to bring attitudinal change. Concerned developing the individual's insight into their own experiences, this theory holds that each person has subjective interpretations in different contexts (Burns, 1995). It considers that most significant learning involves changing one's concept of oneself, and that individual has a natural eagerness to learn. Related to CBT is Carl Rogers' facilitation theory, a humanist approach to learning, developed during the 1980s (Rogers, Kirshenbaum & Henderson, 1989). It holds that learning is facilitated by

establishing an atmosphere in which learners are not threatened by external factors and feel comfortable enough to consider new ideas (Laird, 1985). It may be concluded that it is not only effective approaches to studying that affect students' performance, but also psychological, hidden factors that must be identified to alter cognition.

Before discussing the purpose of this research, it is necessary to understand more about the structure of the Nigerian education system and its implications for students' academic performance.

2.5 The Nigerian education system

An important aspect in the construction of community, education is a channel whereby people can develop towards a better standard of living at both the national and international level (Krashen, 1981). On the international level, the Education for All (EFA) Report (2005) of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) maintained that children, youth, and adults can gain the knowledge and skills they need to improve their lives and play a role in building more peaceful and adequate societies. This has been emphasised in recent research dealing with educational development in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular, on a global and national level (e.g., Fuller & Clarke, 1994; Hedges, 2002; IRFOL, 2004; Jaramillo & Mingat, 2003; Kagitçbasi, 1996; Lambert, 2004; Mingat, 2002; Moll, 1998; Nirantar, 1997; Orazem & Gunnarsson, 2003; Orivel, 2004; Oxenham, 2004). The following section provides an overview of the traditional or indigenous educational system prevalent in Africa, especially Nigeria,

before the introduction of Islamic and Christian education systems, and the modern educational system.

2.5.1 Historical overview of the Nigerian education system

Historically, every society, whether simple or complex, has had a system for training and educating its youth. In Nigeria, education has been one of the most important concerns for its citizenry. Fafunwa (1974) made the first attempt to produce a systematic history of Nigerian education and its goals and objectives, which may be summarised as follows.

1. Total development of the physical skill of the child;
2. Development of intellectual abilities and skills;
3. Inculcating good conduct, a sense of responsibility and respect for authorities and others;
4. Development of character and moral obligations to promote cultural heritage;
5. Development of vocation and special skills for future well-being;
6. Value for hard work.

Fafunwa (1974:1 gives a comparison of different educational values between different nationalities:

> the Greek idea of an educated man was one who was mentally and physically well-balanced. The Romans, on the other hand, placed more emphasis on oratorical and military training; during the Middle Ages in England the knight, the Lord and the Priest were considered classical example of a well-educated elite; in France, the scholar was the hallmark of excellence; in Germany, it was the patriot. In Nigeria, the warrior, the hunter, the nobleman of character or anyone who combined

the latter with a specific skill was judged to be well-educated and well-integrated citizen of his community.

Thus, African society regarded education as a means to an end rather than an end in itself, a coherent system with a consistent manner of life which appears entirely free from fear; enabling individuals to express themselves (Laye, 1954). Education was generally for an immediate induction into society and a preparation for adulthood. In particular, the Nigerian indigenous education took the form of preparing individuals for various occupations and emphasising social responsibility, job orientation, political participation, and spiritual and moral values. A vocation was chosen by taking the individual's physical qualities, perceived intelligence, emotional stability, and sociability into account (Nwankwo, 2006; Anwana, 1989). Every task is considered to offer experience for future living, from making trinkets and etiquette at meal times to, harvesting rice and initiation rites into adulthood (Laye, 1954). Children and adolescents learnt by doing and participating in ceremonies, rituals, initiations, recitations and demonstrations. They were involved in practical farming, hunting, trading, carpentry, smiting, fishing, weaving, cooking, calving, and knitting to develop a livelihood (Andah, 1991).

While recreational educational subjects included wrestling, dancing, drumming, acrobatic displays, and racing, intellectual training included the study of local history, legends, the environment (local geography, plants and animal), poetry, reasoning, riddles, proverbs, story-telling, and story-relays. Education at the local level in Nigeria was an integrated experience. It combined physical training with character building, and manual activity with

intellectual training. Each stage was demarcated either by age level or years of exposure. Children were given a practical test relevant to their level of experience and development and in terms of the job to be done. Assessment was continuous assessment, eventually culminating in a passing-out ceremony or initiation into adulthood qualifying the youth for a better life (Kemjika, 1999). For the elites, secret cults served as institutions for higher learning or further education. It was at this level that the secret of power (real and imaginary), profound native philosophy, and science and religion relevant to the society were mastered.

The arrival of white missionaries and the colonial master to Nigeria in the 1840's to set up schools to teach young Christians to read and write, marked a new era, the introduction of western educational system which promised to empower the economic base of Nigeria to achieve self-reliance and self-employment, and to attain national and international standards of education. Critical of these developments, Achebe (1958, p. 125) argues that the arrival of the missionary to Africa, especially Nigeria, diluted the rich indigenous educational system, and that the international educational system "has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart".

At the international level, the Western education system was based on principles documented in books and rote learning. Although different countries established their own values, practices, methods, and attitudes based on their cultural requirements, this system is a coherent method which organises individual work to exhibit effort, progress and achievement in one or more

areas for the development of a career, and a place in society. Belgian researchers Means, Van Petegem and Van Looy (2006, in Dysthea & Engelsenb, 2011, p. 64) identified four different modes by which higher education is implemented: (1) admission to higher education (assessment of competencies required), (2) during higher education courses, (3) on entrance into the profession (as part of a job application), and (4) as part of professional life (documenting continuing professional development). Dysthea and Engelsenb (2011) found systematic differences between different educational areas where the main dividing line seems to be between professional and non-professional educational practice within and between countries by presenting a case study of selections in Norwegian higher education.

A recent document from the 'Education for All' (EFA) Global Monitoring Report 2005 explained that the main objectives for the United Nations Millennium Declaration by 2015 concerned the instrumental role of schooling in raising achievement and helping children to develop creatively and emotionally by acquiring the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes necessary for a responsible, active and productive life in society.

Launched in 1977, the national policy on education in Nigeria was geared towards self-actualisation of its individuals, aimed at bringing about social, cultural, economic, scientific, political and technological development. The catch phrase "Education for All" emphasises that Nigeria prioritises the educational progress of its students. A statement by the Federal government

suggests that education has been adopted as an instrument par excellence for effective national development (FRN 1981, p. 5) for the purpose of:

- Providing a smooth transition from the home to school.
- Equipping the child for primary level education.
- Inculcating in the child the spirit of knowledge and creativity through exploration of the environment, nature, colours, shapes, form, etc.
- Ensuring and teaching social norms.

The educational system in Nigeria started with the 6-5-4 system and changed to the 6-3-3-4 and now 9-3-4. The 6-3-3-4 referred to six years in primary school, three years in junior secondary school, three years in senior secondary school, and four years in tertiary institution (college, polytechnic, college of technology, or university), while the 9-3-4 system that was introduced in 2006 refers to the six years spent in primary school, three years spent in junior secondary school, and four years in tertiary institution which are merged to form the nine in the 9-3-4 system (Amaghionyeodiwe & Osinubi, 2006) . To actualise the goals of the Nigerian national policy on education, Universal Basic Education (UBE) was launched by the President of Nigeria in 1999 with the objective of providing free education to children at all levels. The UBE education programme is divided into: kindergarten or pre-primary education, of 2-3 years' duration for children ages 3-5 years; 6 years of primary education for children ages 6-12 years; and 6 years of post-primary education, divided into two: 3 years in junior secondary and 3 years in senior

secondary school. Finally, the programme includes 4 years at tertiary level (Amaghionyeodiwe & Osinubi, 2006).

In reality, the implementation of the government programme has been hindered by internal inconsistencies, a lack of law enforcement to execute certain aspects of the programme, and a lack of funding which forced parents to bear the financial burden. This discouraged most parents on low incomes from sending their children or wards to school early. Some young people were left to reach a mature age before starting school, so that they could help their parents to bear the financial burden of the school fees (Osinubi, 2006). However, there are other issues working against early school attendance in Nigeria, especially in the Northern part of the country were most people were farmers. Many of them do not place much value on western education, and some parents prefer their children to go to school late as they believe that education may not be compatible with their cultural upbringing.

Moreover, in the Abuja Education Situation Analysis Report (2003), there was no mention of how the education system could and should be expected to perform in meeting the objectives of achieving the quality of education needed to help individuals achieve their own economic and social goals. From this brief overview of the Nigerian education system, it is clear that more research is needed on how aspects of academic development can be facilitated or improved.

2.6 Purpose of this research

Numerous studies have been conducted in Africa by educationists,

anthropologists, sociologists, philosophers and psychologist to examine the impact of study habits and locus of control on academic performance (e.g. Abdullahi, 2005; Asonibare, 1985; Fakeye, 2011; Jahoda, 1992, 1970; Matsumoto, 1994; Okeke, Draguns & Sheku, in Lee, McCauley & Draguns, 1999; Salami, 2007; Salami & Aremu, 2002; Uwaifo, 2008). However, there has been no empirical investigation into the effects of counselling on the study habits and locus of control of students populations; in particular, how SH and LOC manifest in Year 10 students (aged 15-20) in Nigeria, and what kinds of education-related outcomes characterise this age group. The present research therefore aims to investigate the effects of counselling through the theoretical model of Cognitive Behaviourial Therapy techniques on students' SH and LOC. As argued above, the CBT model of counselling recognises that individuals can improve more quickly once they modify their thinking about themselves and situations (Ellis, 2001b).

The purpose of this research is to investigate the extent to which counselling can be used to alter senior secondary school students' attitudes and improve their academic performance. A counselling intervention measure was used to gain insight into participants' worldviews and their environmental and cultural influences, while considering the developmental changes of senior secondary school students. It is expected that findings from this study could help to identify effective study methods as well as limiting habits and attitudes towards studying. These may be used to help students at risk academically to improve their educational outcomes.

2.6.1 Aims and main objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate whether students who have experienced counselling (both individual and group counselling) alter their negative attitudes towards studying, indicate an improvement in their study habits and show improved academic performance after the counselling intervention. Four main research questions were devised to address these aims, discussed below.

2.7 Research questions

1. How does locus of control vary with age and cultural factors, including attitudes towards education and approaches to learning?
2. Is there a relationship between locus of control and study habits?
3. Can counselling cause an improvement in study habits and a shift in position of the locus of control?
4. What is the impact of counselling on the relationship (if any) between locus of control and effective study habits?

2.8 Research hypotheses

The corresponding hypotheses for each of these research questions are as follows.

Hypothesis 1: Age and cultural factors, including attitudes towards education and approaches to learning, influence the position of locus of control in most Nigerian senior secondary school students.

Hypothesis 2: External locus of control is correlated with poor study habits while internal locus of control is correlated with more effective study habits.

Hypothesis 3: Education through counselling will be associated with the modification of study habits (from less effective to more effective) and a shift in the position of the locus of control in senior secondary school students (from external to internal).

Hypothesis 4: Counselling has an impact on the relationship between study habits and locus of control: improved study habits are correlated with an internal locus of control.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study aimed to examine the effects of counselling on study habits (SH) and locus of control (LOC) of 40 African senior secondary students in Year 10[1] from three schools in Nigeria. It is expected that the counselling intervention will be associated with improved academic performance. Pupils in this year group (Class 5 of Senior Secondary School or SS2 in Nigeria) range in age from 15 to 21 years. In the Nigerian educational system, the class level is not strictly age-dependent. Criteria are stipulated for school age but there is no law enforcing its implementation. As discussed above, many parents are illiterate and do not place a high value on formal education; they are therefore reluctant to send their children and wards to formal education on time.

Shenton, (2004) purported that the richest accounts have been found to emerge from multiple methods, with inter-textual analysis, participant accounts, and the observation of activity working together to produce a fuller portrait of the psycho-social processes at work. Accordingly, this research project involved the use of a mixed-methods design, that is, both quantitative and qualitative procedures. Quantitative measures were used with the aim of discerning any patterns in students' study habits and their attitudes towards school and studying, while qualitative methods were used with the aim of

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[1]Year 10 in Nigerian education is the equivalent of senior secondary Class 5:
- Pre-primary school age 2.5-5 years = Nursery 1-3.
- Primary school age 6-12 years = Class 1-6.
- Secondary school age 12-15 years = Class 1-3 junior secondary school.
- Secondary school age 15-18 years = Class 4-6 senior secondary school.
- Tertiary education age 18 and above = Year 1-4 (this is course dependent).

gaining an in-depth understanding of the context of participants' study habits and locus of control.

3.1.1 Qualitative methods

Teye (2012) contends that qualitative methods are useful for generating data on the experiences, perceptions, emotions, beliefs, and behaviours of participants. They can be used to examine the potential influences of phenomena and obtain insights which cannot be obtained easily by quantitative measures (Smith, 2007). Semi-structured interviews are commonly used qualitative method for generating data about individuals' experiences and perspectives (Hays & Wood, 2010). In this study, qualitative methods took the form of individual, semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews give the researcher the opportunity to gain insight into participants' ways of thinking which could be helpful in designing better study methods for students. This method of inquiry provides a flexible approach for collecting rich, in-depth data about individuals with a view to gaining a deeper understanding of their belief system and capturing the diversity of attitudes towards their SH and LOC (Chassman, Kottler & Madison, 2010; Safman & Sobal, 2004). It is a tool for eliciting individual ideas and opinions and can facilitate disclosure of personal perceptions (Smith, 2007). This approach can also help in synthesising each step as the research process proceeds from gaining a simple to a more complex understanding of participants' views. It is particularly suitable for developing new theoretical constructs that might inform educational practices and generate hypotheses (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Silverman, 2006; Willig, 2007). In this student, semi-structured interviews

formed the individual counselling intervention, while a single education session and an interactive session, to obtain feedback about the counselling process, formed the group counselling method.

The literature review in Chapter 2 argued that counselling processes can enhance the actualising opportunities of individuals, enabling them to work towards living in a more resourceful and fulfilling way by assisting them to develop awareness of their situations, experiences, environmental factors, and worldview (Milne, 2006). Thus, counselling was utilised as a means of providing an atmosphere that is conducive to the effective functioning of the participants. As argued above, counselling techniques are associated with unconditional acceptance and effective listening skills. This makes it possible to obtain rich, detailed accounts that are true to life. The researcher who administered the counselling intervention was also Nigerian and therefore had some familiarity with student's issues and backgrounds. Sugarman (2012, in Feltham & Horton, 2012) purported that the developmental stage of adolescence requires particular sensitivity to the individual's level of perceptive and emotional maturity; the counselling intervention measures were sensitive to the multi-cultural context of the participants and their cultural views (Sue & Sue, 2008).

3.1.2 Quantitative methods

In contrast, quantitative assessment involves the use of objective analysis in the form of standardised tests which are easily quantified using a statistical software package (Amundson et al., 1995). In this study, qquantitative data

was collected via four questionnaires: one to measure locus of control (LOC) and three to measure study habits and approaches to studying, for the before and after measure. The questionnaires were selected because they are widely used in educational research to produce quantitative measures of the two main constructs in the study, SH and LOC. They are detailed in Section 3.4 below.

3.1.3 Design

The present study utilises both qualitative and quantitative methods for its data collection based on a counselling intervention group, and non-counselling intervention control group. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used for the counselling intervention group, while only quantitative methods and a single education session with no counselling were used for the control group.

A within-subjects design was used in order to control for the many inter-individual confounding variables (Dancey & Reidy, 2004). A within-subjects 'before-and-after' research design is appropriate for evaluating an intervention and control over variables by having the same 40 participants in both conditions: before and after the counselling and the before-and-after education session, with a control group having the before-and-after education session without the counselling. Statistical analysis involved related T-Test to compare the means of variables to determine whether the means statistically significant differences exist between the two groups, counselling intervention and control group (male and female). The two independent variables are:

study habits and locus of control. This model is useful as it has the ability to model individual characteristics, and to provide a means of testing and understanding how to interpret their differences.

3.2. Participants

The participants in the study were chosen from three secondary schools from Port Harcourt Rivers State, from the urban and rural area, and one school from the nation capital Abuja. The schools were chosen from different geographical locations to ensure a representative sample of secondary school students in Nigeria.

Forty participants (20 female, 10 in control group and 10 in the counselling intervention group); 20 male (10 boys in control group, 10 boys in the counselling intervention group) all were drawn from the second year of senior secondary school, namely, Class 5 (the equivalent of UK's Year 10). They ranged in age from 15 to 21 years, with male participants having an average age of 16 years and the females having an average age of 15 years. Participants in this study were Year 10 students classified as 'academically at risk' and regarded as academic under-achievers, in terms of poor academic performance. The criteria were not identified by Intelligence Quotient (IQ) test, but rather by the student's Grade Point Average (GPA), which indicated poorer academic performance as classified by the school principals (head teacher) who nominated students in class 5 that were under-performing academically based on their academic records and annual progress report. Those considered 'academically at risk' were identified if they met all of the following criteria: (a) the student did not previously advance from one grade to

the next and (b) the student did not perform satisfactorily on assessments. Thus, there was no bias in the teacher selections as these students were selected based on their academic performance. Meetings with participants were held in a designated classroom for the duration of the study.

Since the terms of the instruments were suitable for students of this age range, the participants understood the questionnaires, for example:

Is it hard to know whether a person really likes you?
I work hard at my studies because I find the material interesting.
Do you regularly attend your classes?
Do you study the lecture slides before each lecture?

However, some of the participants took longer to complete the questionnaires as they were slightly slow in reading.

3.3 Ethical concerns

Each participant was given a letter of instructions on how to answer each questionnaire, and a start sheet to indicate their name, nationality, sex and age. Ethical approval was obtained from the University of Bedfordshire's Institude of Applied Social Research Ethics Committee. Informed consent was not obtained from parents, but only from the principals (head teacher), as the procedures constituted no harm to participants; their rights were upheld and protected. Finally, participants were given a consent form which they signed to indicate their consent to participate in the study. Participants were assured

that their responses would be treated confidentially and their real names would not be used.

Participants' permission were obtained for tape-recording the individual semi-structure interviews, with the explanation that people often say very helpful things during these discussions and researcher cannot write fast enough to get everything down. Participants were informed that all data would be used only for research purposes. They were assured that their responses would remain confidential and that their names and any information given would remain anonymous to protect their identity. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time and without explanation.

3.4 Materials

Four questionnaires widely used by others studies were utilised for quantitative data collection namely:

- Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control Scale (Used by: Oliver, Jose, and Brough 2006; Perry, Lui, and Griffin 2011; Huntley, Palmer, and Wakeling 2012; Beretvas, Suizzo, Durham, and Yarnell 2008);
- the Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ) adapted from: Virginia Gordon's University Survey: A Guidebook and Reading for New Students (2001). (Used by: Crede and Kuncel 2006; Nathanson, Pruslow and Levitt 2008);
- Wrenn's (1969) Study Habits Inventory (SHI) (Used by: Jiang and Leung 2012; Garine 1980; Shaws2010; Gist and Burg 1997);
- the Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F) Biggs, Kember and

Leung (2004) (Used by: Peltier, Hay and Drago 2005; Tan 2011; Kirby, Silvertri, Parrila and Lafaye 2008; Li 2010; Wong and Lam 2007; Leung, Ginns and Kember 2008; Immekus and Imbrie 2010).

It should be noted that the Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ) and Wrenn's (1969) Study Habits Inventory (SHI) measure the similar constructs, but with a slightly different focus. While the SHI measures methods of studying, reading and writing in terms of the participant's knowledge of appropriate study strategies and methods, and their ability to manage time and other resources to meet academic demand, the SHQ measures time management, study environment, and various skills (test-taking/preparation, note-taking, reading, writing, maths) and the degree to which participants engage in regular acts of studying that are characterised by effective study routines and understanding of study contents (e.g. how materials were assessed and reviewed) within an environment that is conducive for learning/studying (Crede & Kuncel, 2008).

Each participant was given all four questionnaires before measure and after measure assessment. The subject level predictors variables were female and male participants. All participants in the study completed and returned the questionnaires.

Each of these questionnaires has different scoring methods. In order to compare items within each numerical subscale, certain items needed to be reverse-scored in some questionnaires, that is, the highest and the lowest numerical values were substituted for each other. Each questionnaire will be

discussed in turn.

3.4.1 Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control Scale

The most widely-used questionnaire to measure locus of control is the 29-item forced-choice scale of Rotter (1966). This scale comprised of 29 items which determine an individual's beliefs about what causes their actions. These items investigate how beliefs guide what kinds of attitudes and behaviours participants adopt to inform their decision-making. The measure was operationalised by questions such as *"(a) The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense" and "(b) I have often found that what is going to happen will happen*".

Scoring procedure for the LOC Scale

The Rotter (1966) LOC Scale has no sub-scale; some items in the questionnaire were reverse-scored according to the original Rotter scale (1954) which contained 6 fillers that were not computed for analysis and 23 scoring items were calculated for data analysis by scoring 1 for right answer and 0 for wrong answer and the scale range from 1 to 2. A score of 1 refers to an internal locus of control while 0 refers to an external locus of control.

3.4.2 Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ)

This consists of 7 subscales, containing 42 items adapted from Virginia Gordon's University Survey (2001): A Guidebook and Readings for New

Students[2] which evaluates students' attitudes and habits in terms of 7 dimensions: (1) their time management; (2) preferred place of study; (3) test taking and preparation skills; (4) reading skills; (5) note taking skills; (6) reading skills; (6) writing skills and (7) maths skills, to discover areas in which participants struggle with their attitudes towards studying. (1) Time management, for example, was operationalised by such questions as *"(a)Do you make a master schedule for each semester?"* and *"(b) Do you stick to it?"*

Scoring procedure for the SHQ

The items in this questionnaire were not reversed scored.

3.4.3 Wrenn's (1969) Study Habits Inventory (SHI)

This is a 15-item self-report inventory to identify student's particular study weaknesses for remedial assistance and counselling; to enable individual students to identify particular study habits which they need to modify; to help students understand their readiness for academic study. It uses a Likert-scale response format and covers three areas of study habits: (1) studying, (2) reading, and (3) writing, with 5 items each in the three sections. (1) was operationalised by questions such as *"I study course material (choose one): (a) several times a week, even if for short time periods; (b) once a week". (2)* Reading was operationalised by questions such as: *"I read the assigned readings (choose all that apply) (a) "before the lecture"; (b) "after the lecture".* (3) Writing was operationalised by questions such as "*After writing an answer, I... (choose all that apply) (a) "Move on to the next question"; (b) Read the*

[2] A PDF version of this questionnaire is available on-line: https://www.msu.edu/~uud/Documents/STUDY%20HABITS%20QUESTIONNAIRE1.pdf (Accessed March 2012).

answer looking for content errors, grammar errors, and unaddressed prompts".

Scoring procedure for the SHI

This questionnaire has 3 sub-scales with 5 items each relating to: (1) studying, (2) reading and (3) writing. Certain scores were reversed scored on each subscale. The scores on this scale range from 1-5; a higher score up to 5 signifies that students have developed more effective study habits, while a lower score down to 0 indicates poorer study habits. SHI measure factors that contribute to good academic performance and its scores have been found to predict educational achievement (Jiao & Onwuegbuzie, 2001; Onwuegbuzie, Slate & Schwartz, 2001; Santa, 1998).

3.4.4 Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F)

The Revised Two Factor Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F) of Biggs, Kember and Leung (2001) contains 29 items. Using fewer items than the original SPQ, the revised instrument enables teachers to evaluate the learning approaches of their students, assessing 'deep' and 'surface' approaches. The items address the different affective (motive) and cognitive (strategy) ways in which students experience and respond to the learning situation (Fernando, Pichardo, Francisco, Berben & Jesús-De la, 2008).

The questionnaire has four subscales that investigate a student's (1) deep motive, (2) deep strategy, (3) surface motive and (4) surface strategy of studying. The Deep Motive measure was operationalised by questions such

as *"(a) I find that studying academic topics can at times be as exciting as a good novel or movie; (b) I work hard at my studies because I find the material interesting".* The Deep strategy measure was operationalised by questions such as *"(a)I test myself on important topics until I understand them completely; (b) I spend a lot of my free time finding out more about interesting topics which have been discussed in different classes*". Surface motives operationalised by questions such as *"(a) I find it is not helpful to study topics in depth. It confuses and wastes time, when all you need is a passing acquaintance with topics; (b) I see no point in learning material which is not likely to be in the examination"*. Surface strategy was operationalised by questions such as *"(a) I believe that lecturers shouldn't expect students to spend significant amounts of time studying material everyone knows won't be examined; (b) I find the best way to pass examinations is to try to remember answers to likely questions".*

Scoring procedure for the R-SPQ-2F

To accurately achieve the attribute been measured, the negative items in the questionnaire were reversed scored before computing the individual's total scores, this was done to ensure that all items - negative items and those that are positive are consistence with each other to attain the reliability of the analysis. On the negative items, 1's were transformed to 5's, and 2's transformed to 4's and all scores on the negative items to become low scores, by so doing, it indicated that low levels of the attribute being measured leaving 3's as neutral.

Biggs, Kember and Leung (2004) conducted a confirmatory factor analysis

and reported good Cronbach alpha values and reasonable goodness-of-fit values. Higher scores indicate more effective approaches to study habits while lower scores indicate that students are performing poorly.

3.5 Procedure

The study began with an initial meeting with the principals and teachers of each school to discuss the research plan. The participants were recruited by the school principal (head teacher) and assigned by the researcher to two groups, counselling intervention group and control group (non-counselling group) for the duration of twelve weeks in total (6 weeks for the counselling intervention group and 6 weeks for the control group) Consent forms were given to participant to obtain their consent.

Table 1 Stages of procedure

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
Group	Baseline/ before measure	Individual counselling	Group	Group	After-measure
Introductory session	4 questionnaires	Semi-structured interview	Education counselling session	Follow-up session	4 questionnaires

Stage 1: Introductory Sessions

Counselling intervention group

A 60-minute introductory, group counselling interactive session was held in a classroom in each school, for the counselling group, to inform all participants of the purpose, nature and duration of the study. The concepts locus of control and study habits were defined and explained. Interaction with group members

was encouraged to enable participants to explore the topic, geared towards sharing their personal experiences related to the two concepts, and raising awareness of "feeling, thoughts and behaviour" (Turkum, 2007). The initial group counselling session facilitated trust and confidence in the researcher, enabling the researcher to explore sensitive issues and actively encourage members to led down their guard (Willing, 2007).

Control group (non counselling)

The same procedure as discussed above was carried out with the control group, but with slight differences. Participants in this group were informed of the purpose, nature and duration of the study, no detailed explanations were given about SH and LOC instead they were told stories on vision, and how to develop vision of what they want to achieve for their future, this was done to create conducive atmosphere free from threats in which participants feel comfortable (Mearns & Thorne, 2010). There was no counselling interactive session during the initial meeting.

Stage 2: Baseline measure four questionnaires

The assessment measure entailed administering the four questionnaires.

This was done to ascertain student's baseline views on study habits and locus of control before the second assessment. The design was a within-subject design in that before and after measures of study habits and locus of control were taken in to account, the treatment being the counselling intervention.

The participants were given the instruction sheet explaining how each

questionnaire was to be answered. Participants were requested to fill in the questionnaires in the classroom setting in order to ensure that they completed the questionnaires on their own and any requests for assistance could be addressed. It was estimated that each questionnaire would take 15 minutes to complete; however, the time taken for the students to fill in all four questionnaires was closer to one hour because some of the participants were slow in reading. In addition, a 15-minute coffee break was held at the half-way point. Upon completion, the questionnaires were collected by the researcher. This concluded the 'before measure' assessment.

Stage 3: The individual counselling session

The individual counselling was an exploratory session with each participant using a semi-structured interview schedule to guide the discussion. The sessions were used mainly to collect data from the participants[3]. A more detailed description of the semi-structured interview schedule appears in Appendix 2. There was no individual counselling with the control group.

Stage 4: The Education session

Three weeks later, the education session for the two groups was administered (counselling intervention and control group). This was conducted after all the individual counselling sessions were completed for the counselling group. The education was on different topics for each group: topics related to study habits and locus of control were taught to the counselling intervention group, aimed

[3] The individual counselling session was initial diagnostic session, to identify the nature of problem and determine what counselling needs may be after diagnostic session, participants may be offered a short or long programme of counselling depending on the nature of problem (Feltham and Horton, 2012; Kurkum, 2007). Group counselling enhances self-expression and thus aims to change attitudes, behaviour, and cognitive processing (Dryden, 1998; Gazda, 1989).

to educate participants about study skills, study habits, attitudes and approaches.[4] This included teaching on study methods, effective time management, goal-setting, planning, and learning styles. While the control group received an education session on study of plant, topics unrelated to the concept of study habits and locus of control.

Stage 5: Follow-up/after measure

A group interactive follow-up session was held with the counselling group, before the after-measure assessment was conducted on the same day. The purpose was to summarise the feedback that participants gave about the benefit of the counselling process. For the control groups, there were no interactive follow-up feedback session but only the after measure assessment was administered. The after-measure entailed administering all four questionnaires to all participants at the end of all the procedures (after the counselling and education session), this was aimed to assess participants' study habits, locus of control and level of improvement in their academic performance.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interviews formed the one-on-one individual counselling intervention of this study. The questions for this interview were devised by the

[4] The researcher proposed a study technique during the education session called 'Patricia Ikiriko's Proposed Technique of Studying: BREAKS' that entails the application of effective study approaches to the type of learning that is necessary for good academic achievement. This was used for the educational counselling process. This technique of studying involves **B**reaking down information into forms which are **R**eadable, **E**asy, **A**chievable, **K**nowable and **S**tructured. The technique encompasses breaking down large topics into smaller, more concise parts and noting key words for easy retention and recall. See Appendix 5.

researcher to explore students' behaviour and gain a deeper insight into participants' academic performance, attitudes affecting their study habits, and locus of control. Details of the questionnaire appear in Appendix 1.

3.6 Data analysis

Data derived from the semi-structured interviews were analysed using a thematic analysis framework for coding qualitative information. The quantitative data were analysed using a related T-Test.

Chapter 4 Result

4.1. Introduction

This study investigates the problem of poor study habits and locus of control among 20 male and 20 female Nigerian secondary-school students. My main research question is whether those who have undergone a counselling intervention (defined as one individual interview session and one group counselling session) altered their negative attitudes towards studying and indicated an improvement in their study habits as a result of the counselling processes. It should be noted that improved academic performance is not one of my posited outcomes of interest, since my study was too short-term to expect any appreciable differences in academic performance, although some might indeed have occurred. The 40 students were divided into two groups: an intervention group that received the counselling intervention (10 males and 10 females) and a control group that did not participate in either of the counselling sessions (10 males and 10 females).

A related t-test was conducted to test whether the means for the two groups (treatment and control group) are statistically different, using the repeated measures model. In this method, the interaction effects between male and female were not explored; a separate analysis was done within subjects (male and female) to prevent Type 1 error. Table 1 and 2 below present the related t-test of within-subject effects for before and after measures (means and standard deviation) on all variables; Table 1 gives the results of the counselling intervention group while Table 2 presents the results of the control

group.

To gain more insight into the ways in which participants' perceive themselves and their studies (Saldana, 2011), I thematically analysed the qualitative data that I gathered from the individual interviews. This analysis revealed four main themes that are related to the four research questions stipulated in Chapter 1.

4.2 Related t-test of within-subject effects

Table 1: Counselling intervention group: Related t-test of within-subject effects comparing before and after measures on all 15 variables

Variable	Gender	Measures		t-value	df	p
		Before	After			
Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ)						
SHQ Time Management	**Male**	22.5 (3.02)	47.0 (8.81)	-8.373	9	.000
	Female	22.7 (2.11)	33.4 (3.09)	-10.815	9	.000
SHQ Your Study Environment	**Male**	25.3 (3.02)	16.0 (5.05)	4.586	9	.001
	Female	26.8 (1.39)	10.9 (2.02)	16.982	9	.000
SHQ Test Taking/Preparation Skill	**Male**	26. 4 (2.06)	16.0 (5.05)	5.032	9	.001
	Female	26.5 (1.43)	10.9 (2.02)	17.158	9	.000
SHQ Note Taking Skills	**Male**	20.8 (2.39)	9.9 (2.51)	8.052	9	.000
	Female	20.3 (1.88)	9.5 (2.06)	11.074	9	.000
SHQ Reading Skills	**Male**	20.8 (2.39)	14.7 (3.36)	3.876	9	.004
	Female	20.3 (1.88)	11.0 (1.49)	12.721	9	.000
SHQ Writing Skills	**Male**	19.9 (1.52)	14.8 (3.25)	3.502	9	.007
	Female	19.8 (2.44)	9.6 (2.87)	9.160	9	.000
SHQ Maths Skills	**Male**	18.2 (2.52)	14.2 (1.61)	4.191	9	.002
	Female	20.4 (1.77)	11.5	9.889	9	.000

			(2.27)			
Study Habits Inventory (SHI)						
SHI Study Question	**Male**	10.8 (2.52)	9.7 (1.94)	1.276	9	.234
	Female	7.5 (2.59)	6.9 (1.19)	.721	9	.489
SHI Reading Question	**Male**	3.5 (1.71)	6.1 (.79)	-3.788	9	.004
	Female	2.8 (.78)	6.2 (1.03)	-10.002	9	.000
SHI Writing Question	**Male**	3.6 (.96)	4.8 (.63)	-3.674	9	.005
	Female	3.7 (1,15)	4.0 (.94)	-758	9	.468
Revised Study Process Questionnaire (RSPQ)						
RSPQ Deep Motive	**Male**	10.1 (1.37)	16.5 (3.83)	-4.289	9	.002
	Female	11.1(3.10)	12.7 (3.43)	-1.112	9	.295
RSPQ Deep Strategy	**Male**	9.7 (2.45)	14.8 (3.67)	-3.814	9	.004
	Female	10.5 (2.87)	16.0 (3.36)	-3.821	9	.004
RSPQ Surface Motive	**Male**	13.3 (3.26)	17.1 (1.91)	-3.382	9	.008
	Female	10.3 (2.83)	14.3 (1.88)	-3.586	9	.006
RSPQ Surface Strategy	**Male**	10.7 (3.80)	16.7 (2.49)	-4.73	9	.001
	Female	12.0 (1.82)	13.0 (2.53)	-.989	9	.348
Locus Of Control Questionnaire (LOCQ)						
Locus Of Control	**Male**	12.2 (2.20)	12.7 (2.11)	-.655	9	.529
	Female	9.4 (2.22)	12.1 (1.79)	-3.619	9	.006

Table 2: Control group: Related t-test of within-subject effects comparing before and after measures on all 15 variables

Variable	**Gender**	**Measures**		**t-value**	**Df**	***p***
		Before	**After**			
Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ)						
SHQ Time Management	**Male**	21.1 (4.25)	28.4 (2.22)	-4.920	9	.001
	Female	26.0 (1.94)	26.2 (2.04)	-452	9	.662

SHQ Your study environment	**Male**	23.1 (5.50)	29.6 (1.26)	-4.191	9	.002
	Female	27.6 (1.07)	27.2 (1.31)	1.078	9	.309
SHQ Test Taking/Preparation Skill	**Male**	23.1 (5.02)	29.6 (1.83)	-3.912	9	.004
	Female	30.4 (0.69)	29.9 (1.28)	1.464	9	.177
SHQ Note Taking Skills	**Male**	17.7 (5.29)	23.0 (1.49)	-2.922	9	.017
	Female	23.4 (0.69)	23.3 (0.82)	1.000	9	.343
SHQ Reading Skills	**Male**	19.2 (3.11)	22.3 (.82)	-3.398	9	.008
	Female	22.3 (0.48)	21.8 (1.13)	1.861	9	.096
SHQ Writing Skills	**Male**	16.6 (3.74)	22.3 (1.15)	-5.062	9	.001
	Female	22.2 (0.63)	22.3 (0.94)	-361	9	.726
SHQ Maths Skills	**Male**	18.5 (4.22)	21.1 (1.72)	-1.692	9	.125
	Female	21.3 (1.25)	21.5 (1.43)	-480	9	.642
Study Habits Inventory (SHI)						
SHI Study Question	**Male**	10.3 (5.57)	8.7 (2.86)	.930	9	.377
	Female	7.1 (2.23)	6.7 (3.33)	.298	9	.773
SHI Reading Question	**Male**	4.7 (2.94)	4.3 (3.26)	.314	9	.761
	Female	2.1 (1.66)	2.3 (.82)	-408	9	.693
SHI Writing Question	**Male**	3.5 (1.77)	4.4 (.69)	-1.588	9	.147
	Female	2.0 (.94)	2.4 (.69)	-1.177	9	.269
Revised Study Process Questionnaire (RSPQ)						
RSPQ Deep Motive	**Male**	12.5 (5.35)	9.2 (2.70)	1.838	9	.099
	Female	9.6 (3.09)	9.3 (3.43)	.326	9	.752
RSPQ Deep Strategy	**Male**	10.9 (3.34)	8.8 (1.81)	1.690	9	.125
	Female	8.9 (3.60)	9.2 (3.24)	.709	9	.496
RSPQ Surface Motive	**Male**	17.1 (4.74)	15.5 (3.24)	.843	9	.421
	Female	13.1 (1.70)	13.2 (2.29)	-098	9	.924

RSPQ Surface Strategy	**Male**	16.0 (3.71)	16.3 (5.14)	-137	9	.894
	Female	14.8 (3.25)	14.6 (3.71)	.327	9	.751
Locus Of Control Questionnaire (LOCQ)						
Locus Of Control	**Male**	12.8 (4.04)	21.5 (3.50)	-5.004	9	.001
	Female	10.9 (2.55)	9.9 (2.23)	.745	9	.475

I will first discuss the results for the female students before turning to the results for the males.

4.2.1 Female participants

The Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ) has seven sub-scales. The results from this questionnaire reveal that there was a statistical significant difference in the before- and after-measure for the counselling group on all sub-scales; only the time management among the sub scales showed positive change with means score before (M = 22.70, SD = 2.11) after measure (33. 40, SD = 3.09);t (9) = 10.82, p = 000. This suggests that participants' study habits time management improved after counselling. While there was no statistical significance difference for the control group on all sub scales.

The Study Habits Inventory (SHI) has three sub-scales: Study, Reading and Writing, the scores on this scale range from 1-5; a higher score up to 5 signifies that students have developed more effective study habits, while a lower score down to 1 indicates poorer study habits. The results indicate that counselling had a positive effect only on the Reading Question. For the counselling group, there was a significant difference in the before-measure scores (M = 2.80, SD=.78) and the after-measure scores (M=6.20, SD=1.03);

t=10.002, *p*=.000 this score suggest that participants had an improved awareness of what is expected of them for a good academic performance, such as reading assigned readings before the lecture and after the lecture. In contrast, for the control group, there was no significant difference in the before-measure scores (M=2.10, SD=1.66) and the after-measure scores (M=2.30, SD=.82); *t* =-408, *p*=.693. Study questions result showed that participants do not study course material several times a week, even if for short time period, and the writing question reveal that participants start writing after reading the first sentence or prompt.

The Revised Study Process Questionnaire (RSPQ) tests participants' study habits with four sub-scales. The items address the different affective (motive) and cognitive (strategy) ways in which students experience and respond to the learning situation. On deep motive sub scale, participants find that at times studying gives them a feeling of deep personal satisfaction, but in deep strategy, participants find that they have to do enough work on a topic so that they can form their own conclusion before they are satisfied. The 'Deep Strategy' measure showed a significant difference for the counselling intervention group. For this group, there was a significant difference in the before-measure scores (M=10.50, SD=2.87) and the after-measure scores (M=16.00, SD=3.36); *t* =3.82, *p*=.004. This suggests that, after counselling, female participants found that they were more motivated in their studies, or found the material more interesting. In contrast, this measure did not show a statistically significant difference for the control group. For this group, there was no significant difference in the before-measure scores (M=8.92, SD=3.60)

and the after-measure scores (M=9.20, SD=3.22); t =0.71; p=.496. This suggests that, without the counselling intervention, students' study habits remain unchanged.

The Surface Motive refers to such items as students 'seeing no point in learning material which is unlikely to be examined'. This measure showed a statistically significant difference for the counselling group, with the before-measure scores being lower (M=10.30, SD=2.83) than the after-measure scores (M=14.30, SD=1.88); t =-3.586, p=.006, while for the control group there was no significant difference in the before-measure scores (M=13.10, SD=1.79) and the after-measure scores (M=13.20, SD=2.29); t =-.098, p= .924. These results suggest that counselling really does have an effect on study habits. Specifically, the results suggest that when students undergo counselling, certain study habits improve.

For scoring on **Rotter's Locus of Control Scale**, there are no subscales. The scores on this scale range from 1-2; a higher score 2 indicates to internal locus of control while a lower score 1 indicates external locus of control. The counselling group showed a significant difference in scores before the intervention (M=9.4, SD = 2.22) and after the intervention (M=12.1, SD=1.19); t =-3.62, p=.006, whereas there was no significant difference for the control group's before-measure scores (M=10.9, SD=2.55) and after-measures scores (M=9.9, SD=2.23); t =0.745, p=.475. The results for the female participants support the conclusion that participants who have experienced counselling (both individual and group counselling) altered their negative

attitudes towards studying and indicated an improvement in their study habits.

4.2.2 Male participants

I will now discuss the results for the male participants. Table 1 and 2 above show related t-test for males participants comparing before- and after-measure scores for all variables for the counselling and control groups respectively.

The results from the **Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ)** reveal that there was a significant difference ($p<.005$) in the before- and after-measure for the counselling group on all sub-scales. For example, the counselling group's scores for Time Management before the intervention were lower (M=22.5, SD=3.02) than their scores after the intervention (M=47.0 SD=8.81); t =-8.37, *p*=.000. While there was no significance difference with two measures for the control group: note taking skills. The control group's scores before the intervention (M=21.1 SD=4.25) were not significantly different from those after the intervention (M=28.4, SD=2.22); t =-4.92, *p*=.001. Thus, after counselling, the Time Management mean was higher for the counselling group than for the control group, indicating improvement on this measure due to the counselling intervention.

The **SHQ** scores for the sub-scale 'Your Study Environment' showed a significant difference for the before- and after-measures for both the counselling group and the control group. The counselling group's scores before the intervention were higher (M=25.3, SD=3.02) than their scores after

the intervention (M=16.0, SD=5.05); t =4.586, p=.001r The control group's scores before the intervention were lower (M=23.1, SD=5.50) than their scores after the intervention (M=29.6, SD=1.26); t =-4.191, p=002.

For the **SHQ** subscale 'Test Taking/Preparation Skills', There was a statistically significant difference between the counselling group's before-measure scores (M=26.4, SD=2.06) and their after-measurement scores (M=16.0, SD=5.05); t =5.032; *p*=.001r Interestingly, there was also a significant difference in the control group between before-measure scores (M=23.1, SD=5.02) and the after-measure scores (M=29.6, SD=1. 83); t =-3.912, *p*=.004

For the **SHQ** subscale 'Note Taking Skills', there was a statistically significant difference between the counselling group's before-measure scores (M=20.8, SD=2.39) and their after-measure scores (M=9.90, SD=2.51); t =8.052, *p*=.000 for this sub-scale, whereas there was no significant difference for control group between its before-measure scores (M=17.7, SD=5.29) and the after-measure scores (M=23.0, SD=1.49); t =-2.922, *p*=.017.

For the **SHQ** subscale 'Reading Skills', there was a statistically significant difference between the counselling group's before-measure scores (M=20.8, SD=2.39) and their after-measure scores (M=14.7, SD=3.36); t =3.87, p=.004, whereas there was no statistical significant difference for control group between its before-measure scores (M=19.2, SD=3.r11) and the after-measure scores (M=22.3, SD=0.82); t =-3.39, *p*=.008.

For the **SHQ** subscale 'Writing Skills', there was a statistically significant difference between the control group's before-measure scores (M=16.6, SD=3.74) and their after-measure scores (M=22.3, SD=1.15); t =-5.062, p=.001, whereas there was no significant difference for counselling group between its before-measure scores (M=19.2, SD=3.11) and the after-measure scores (M=14.8, SD=3.25); t =-3.502, p=.007.

For the **SHQ** subscale your study environment both showed significant difference for control group before (M = 27.6, SDr= 1.94) after (M = 27.2, SDr= 1.31) t = 4.19, p = 002 .and counselling before (M = 26.8, SD =1, 39) after (M = 10.9, SDr= 2.02) t =16.99, *p* = 000. 'Maths Skills', there was a statistically significant difference between the counselling group's before-measure scores (M=18.2, SD=2.52) and their after-measure scores (M=14.2, SD=1.61); t =4.191, p=.002, whereas there was no significant difference for control group between its before-measure scores (M=18.5, SD=3.11) and the after-measure scores (M=21.1, SD=1.72); t =-1.692, p=.125.

The Study Habits Inventory (SHI) revealed significant differences only within the counselling group and mainly on the Reading Question (and not the Study Question or the Writing Question). From the SHI 'Study Question, the control group was found to be statistically non-significant means before (M = 4.7, SD = 2.94) after (M =4.3, SD = 3.26) t = .32 =p .761. However, the counselling means was found to be statistically significant before (M = 3.5, SD = 1.71) after (M = 6.1, SD = .73) t = 3.79 = p =.004 this showed that participants

performed better because of the counselling intervention.

However, the **SHI** revealed a slightly significant difference within the counselling group on the Writing Question. There was a statistically significant difference between the counselling group's before-measure scores (M=3.6, SD=0.96) and their after-measure scores (M=4.8, SD=0.63); t =-3.674, p=.005, whereas there was no significant difference for the control group between its before-measure scores (M=3.5, SD=1.77) and the after-measure scores (M=4.4, SD=0.69); t =-1.588, p=.147. These results suggest that, after counselling, male students were more assiduous and conscious about their writing skills as part of their learning.

The **Revised Study Process Questionnaire (RSPQ)** revealed significant differences only within the counselling group and for three of the four subscales: Deep Motive, Deep Strategy and Surface Strategy; thus the Surface Motive scores were not significant.

For **Deep Motive**, there was a statistically significant difference between the counselling group's before-measure scores (M=10.1, SD=1.37) and their after-measure scores (M=16.5, SD=3.83); t =-4.289, p=.002, whereas there was no significant difference for the control group between its before-measure scores (M=12.5, SD=5.35) and the after-measure scores (M=9.2, SD=2.70); t =1.838, p=.099. These results suggest that counselling can improve male participants' motives to learn and their reported interest in studying a topic.

For **Deep Strategy**, there was a statistically significant difference between the

counselling group's before-measure scores (M=9.7, SD=2.45) and their after-measure scores (M=14.8, SD=3.67); t =-3.814, p=.004, whereas there was no significant difference for the control group between its before-measure scores (M=10.9, SD=3.34) and the after-measure scores (M=8.8, SD=1.81); t =1.690, p=.125. These results suggest that counselling can improve male participants' study strategy.

For **Surface Motive**, there was a non-significant difference between the counselling group's before-measure scores (M=13.3, SD=3.26) and their after-measure scores (M=17.1, SD=1.91); t =-3.382, p=.008. Similarly, there was no significant difference for the control group between its before-measure scores (M=17.1, SD=4.74) and the after-measure scores (M=15.5, SD=3.24); t =0.843, p=.421. Surface motives refer to such items as "*(a) I find it is not helpful to study topics in depth. It confuses and wastes time, when all you need is a passing acquaintance with topics; (b) I see no point in learning material which is not likely to be in the examination*".

For **Surface Strategy**, there was a statistically significant difference between the counselling group's before-measure scores (M=10.7, SD=3.80) and their after-measure scores (M=16.7, SD=2.49); t =-4.73, p=.001, whereas there was no significant difference for the control group between its before-measure scores (M=16.0, SD=3.71) and the after-measure scores (M=16.3, SD=5.14); t =-137, p=.894. These results suggest that counselling could be used as a method to help students gain deeper insight into how to develop good study strategies.

As mentioned above for the **Rotter's Locus of Control Scale** relating to attitudes, a higher score 2 indicates to internal locus of control while a lower score 1 indicates external locus of control. The counselling group showed no significant difference in scores before the intervention (M=12.2, SD = 2.20) and after the intervention (M=12.7, SD=2.11); t =-0.655, p=.529, whereas there was a significant difference for the control group's before-measure scores (M=12.8, SD=4.04) and after-measures scores (M=21.5, SD=3.50); t =-5.004, p=.001. This suggests that there was a change of attitudes in the *control* group participants; their perception and interpretation of situations shifted from an external locus of control to an internal locus of control with no counselling. This result indicates that there is no evidence that counselling strongly affected the performance of the counselling group.

4.2.3 Summary

While the main effects showed that there were significant difference between the before-measure and after-measure scores overall (p<.005), female participants in the counselling group showed a greater change than the male on the **Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ)**, with a higher probability of being correct (p=.000 for all subscales) than the male scores (where p-values were slightly larger but still significant). In contrast, the male participants' scores in the control group showed that there was no significant difference in before-and after scores on Not Taking Skills (p=.017), Reading Skills (p=.008) and Maths Skills (p=.125). This suggests that the females show more improvement in their study habits after counselling than did the males. However, the male

participants in the control group showed before-and-after measure scores that were significantly different on the following SHQ measures (p<.005): Time Management; Your Study Environment; Test/Preparation Skills; Writing Skills. This group also showed improvement in Locus of Control scores (p=.001) even though they did not undergo counselling.

On the **Study Habits Inventory (SHI)**, only the counselling group showed improvement. Whereas females showed improvement on the Reading Question only (p=.000), males showed improvement on both the Reading Question (p=.004) and marginally on the Writing Question (p=.005). This suggests that female student improved their reading skills after the counselling intervention. This question includes such items as: *(1) I read the assigned readings: a.) before the lecture; b.) after the lecture; c.) before the test; d.) never; (4) When I come across a word or phrase in the text with which I'm unfamiliar, I... a.) just continue on, or stop reading [...] g.) make a note of the word and its meaning for review.*

On the **Revised Study Process Questionnaire (RSPQ)**

The females counselling group means score showed a statistical significant difference p < .005 on Deep Strategy, surface motive and surface strategy sub-scales, whereas there was no a statistical significant difference for the male participants on these sub-scales, Indicating that female performance was as a result of counselling.

On the **Locus of Control Scale**, the higher the score, the more desirable the

attitude towards studying; a lower score indicates external locus of control. There were no significant improvements in the counselling group, based on a p-value of less than .005. Although the counselling group females improved slightly, this was not significant (p=.006). In contrast, there was some improvement in the control group males (p=.001). It is not clear why the control group males would improve their locus of control from more external to more internal without counselling. The female control actually decreased their locus of control scores. Although the counselling groups improved their locus of control scores, these were not statistical significant. The females in both groups had lower LOC figures overall, suggesting that the females had a better attitude (internal locus of control) overall than the males, although this was not significantly affected by counselling.

Overall, the above results show that the counselling intervention was associated with improved study habits across most of the measures.

4.3 Qualitative study using thematic analysis

The data from the semi-structured in-depth interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, a widely-used qualitative analytic method (see Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001ǫ in Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data or interview process (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Rubin and Rubin, 1995). It enables participants experiences, meanings and the realties to be organised in the data into themes to facilitate analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).. According to Boyatzis (1998) thematic analysis also allows the interpretative

social construction of meaning to be articulated with reliability because with consistency of judgement, reliable observations seem to emerge. He also contends that this method enables scholars, researchers, and other practitioners to treat many different types of information in a systematic way that increases their accuracy or sensitivity in understanding and interpreting observation about people, events, situations, and organisation. This process involve reading through the data intensively to identify a pattern of code, that leads the researcher from the data to the idea, and produce a list of codes which interpret several aspect of the research objectives and semi structured interview questions (Kings, 2004; Richards & Morse, 2007).

Coding is the basic action in qualitative analysis which involves breaking down different parts of the interview process of the data, and assembling them into categories which later become the building block of a descriptive model of the phenomenon (Robertson, Kerridge & Walter, 2009).

Saldaña (2001) describes coding as an act that filters, highlights, and focuses the main features of qualitative data records for generating categories, themes and concepts, as well as grasping meaning and building theories, it enables the researcher to organise data into similar groups or categories because they share the same characteristic. Thus, code and themes are different concept; Boyatzis (1998) defines themes as a pattern found in the information that describes and organizes the possible observations and interprets aspect of the phenomenon. Rossman and Rallis (2003) distinguish the two concepts by stipulating that themes capture something very important in the data that is

related to the research questions, while coding is a sentence or phrase that describes the data. Similarly, Saldaña (2009, p. 3) defines a code as 'most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data' for example, "student study habits" can be describe as a code while "a student's study habits affects his or her academic performance" can be a theme. Adonu (2012) describes coding as a way of linking specific quotes to analytic concepts and categories which involves the researcher through attentive interactions with the research data.

4.3.1 Coding Scheme Generation

In qualitative thematic analysis, there are different systematic ways of developing themes and codes to achieve the research goals. Braun and Clarke (2006) developed a six step-by-step guide for conducting thematic analysis:

Step I - Familiarising with the data

Step II - Generating initial codes

Step III - Searching for themes

Step IV – Reviewing themes

Step V – Defining and naming themes

Step VI – Producing the report.

More broadly, Boyatzis, (1998) showed three simple stages for developing themes and codes effectively:

stage 1). Deciding on sampling and design issue

Stage 2) developing themes and code

Stage 3) Validating and using the codes

Arguably Braun and Clarke's (2006) 'Step III – Searching for themes' overlaps with Boyatzis's (1998) 'Stage 3 – Validating and using the codes'. Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that the coding system depends on whether the research is "data-driven" or "theory driven". Aligned with this, Boyatzis (1998) explains that within the second stage there are different ways to develop a thematic code: (i) theory driven, (ii) prior data- or research-driven, and (iii) data driven or inductive using raw data from the research interview or data driven. I will be using a data- driven inductive approach to category development. This process provides grounding for understanding and interpretation of participant's views and experiences from contextual data to achieve research goals.

Saldaña (2016, p. 47) makes the important point that "no one including myself, can claim final authority on the best way to code qualitative data". Saldaña (2016, p. 45) argues that "data are not coded – they're recoded" and suggested two main coding stages. The first cycle of coding is divided into seven subcategories (Grammatical Methods; Elemental Methods; Affective Methods; Literary and Language Methods; Exploratory Methods; Procedural Methods; Theme-ing the Data)[5]. The second cycle of coding requires more analytic skills, including: Pattern Coding, Focused Coding, Axial Coding,

[5] 1. Grammatical Methods – Attribute Coding, Magnitude Coding, and Simultaneous Coding, 2. Elemental Methods – Structural Coding, Descriptive Coding, In Vivo Coding, Process Coding, and Initial Coding, 3. Affective Methods – Emotion Coding, Values Coding, Versus Coding, and Evaluation Coding, 4. Literary and Language Methods – Dramaturgical Coding, Motif Coding, Narrative Coding, and Verbal Exchange Coding, 5. Exploratory Methods – Holistic Coding, Provisional Coding, and Hypothesis Coding, 6. Procedural Methods – OCM (Outline of Cultural Materials) Coding, Protocol Coding, and Domain and Taxonomic Coding, 7. Themeing the Data

Theoretical Coding, Elaborative Coding, and Longitudinal Coding. Saldaña (2011) recommends that the coding system used should depend upon the nature or the goal of the study, and that it is possible use one or variety of methods to achieve the aims and objectives of the study.

While I followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step guide for generating codes, and Boyatzis's (1998) three stages, the unique, colloquial and subjective nature of my raw data necessitated the use of Saldaña's (2011) in vivo coding which provides basis for understanding background interpretation to capture the views and actions in the data as posited by participants. In vivo coding is suitable as it is the practice of assigning a label to a section of data, such as an interview transcript, using a word or short phrase taken from that section of participants view in the data (King, 2008). I validated the codes using the code percentage agreement method that demonstrates the reliability and consistency of the measure from one time to another for reliability of the process. This is discussed in more detail below (section 4.4).

4.3.2 In vivo coding

The aim of creating an in vivo code is to ensure that concepts stay as close as possible to research participants' own words or use their own terms in order to understand individual cognition and behaviour (King, 2008). The in vivo coding method was chosen to enable the research aims and objectives to be precisely conceptualised. Utilising participants' actual word can enhance understanding of their cultural and world-view (Corey, 2009). According to Charmaz (2006, p. 57), in vivo coding can provide a crucial check on whether

you have grasped what is "significant" to the participant; it can "crystallise" and condense meaning thereby helping the researcher to code precisely according to participant presentation. In addition, it helps to establish clear links between the research objectives and the descriptive findings of the research acquired from the raw data as mentioned by participants during the interview. Finally, it provides an efficient way of doing qualitative data analysis and fulfilling the purpose of the research (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Boyatzis's (1998) inductive method, Step 1, and Braun and Clarke's (2006) Step 1 were used to understand the raw interview data. This involved actively reading and re-reading the interview transcripts to identify possible patterns as presented by participants. This phase was useful as I was able to concentrate on reading every statement carefully without neglecting any words. This activity is important as it provides the basis for the rest of the analysis (Birds, 2005: 227 in Braun and Clarke, 2006).

4.4 Analysis of the counselling sample

4.4. 1 Preparation of the data

The data were derived from the semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted between the researcher and 20 students in English, the official language of Nigeria. There are hundreds of languages spoken in Nigeria, the major languages are Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Ibibio, Edo, Fulfulde, and Kanuri. The official language of Nigeria, English, the former colonial language, was chosen to facilitate the cultural and linguistic unity of the country, although, "Peggen English language" is used as general language of

communication among the people. However because the students' English language is accented, there was a risk of incorrectly transcribing what they were saying, leading to an invalid analysis of the data. Because it was difficult to note down everything in the participants' colloquial English language, the interviews were tape-recorded by the researcher and preliminarily transcribed myself, as I was able to understand the accent better (the main researcher and interviewer) before sending the tapes to a professional transcriber who is also a Nigerian to minimise the chance of misinterpreting the data. After receiving the completed transcriptions from the professional, I cross-checked the transcripts to ensure that every word was recorded verbatim and nothing was lost in the process of transcription. Care was taken to ensure participants details remained confidential by replacing each name with a code. The transcriber sent back all the recorded tapes to researcher at the completion of the transcription.

4.4. 2 Familiarisation with the data

Using the inductive approach of code development, which enables codes and themes to emerge from the data, the researcher read through each transcript approximately 7-10 times to grasp more detail and gain a better understanding of how the data relates to the research questions. The codes were generated manually, using a highlighter to indicate potential patterns. The codes were comprised of short phrases from the data while the themes were longer phrases. During the initial review of the data, the research questions were noted on a piece of paper to help researcher remain focused on identifying coding and themes appropriate for each research question.

4.4. 3. Preliminary coding with 20 participants

In the process of devising the initial codes, I paid close attention to the feeling, thoughts, beliefs, cultural values, and behaviours reflected by the participants' utterances, with the assumption that this would lead to insights about participants' locus of control. Each potential coding item was highlighted to indicate that all data were correctly coded before grouping the codes into a theme. During this coding process, I generated codes that addressed the attribution-based on interview questions: research question 1. What factors control the position of locus of control (are culture and age factors)? "What do participants think is responsible if they do not do well in their studies?" Examples of utterances addressing this theme concerning attribution are as follows (all transcripts are verbatim as posited by participants).

> *Stud: Mmm I will put the blame on my guardians because I don't stay with my real parents. So they maltreat me, you know when I come back from school I don't much time to read my books. You know I, I sell so I don't really have much time to pay attention to my books so that has been a major reason*
>
> *(Participant 10, female, age 18)*

> *The teachers are not doing their work; my parents do not give me chance to study at home* ***(Participant 3, female, age 15).***

I think it should be my friends, that's what I think. As in when am, when am at home if I refuse reading when they told me that I should go and read and I fail the test they'll feel angry and they will seems that it was because of as I was playing at home that I fail the test ***(Participants 4, female, age 15).***

Q 2. What is the impact of counselling on the causal link between locus of control and study habits outcome?

Participants' beliefs about what factors affect their academic performance are reflected by the following quotes.

My father brothers: In a spiritual way use charm to block us, they will er… they will try to block, block us in their own evil way so that is it. And my friends they don't go to school at all but I do not know what make me to make friends with all those people ***(Participant 1, female, age 15)****.*

My family too they're not educat- they're not educateds[…] too much work at home and my younger ones they'll ask me to help them to do their assignment their own work and to do their house work at home, that's why ***(Participant 11, male, age 18).***

Participants' beliefs about what factors are responsible for their grades in school are reflected by the following quotes.

Number one is may be lack of reading. Then number two, after teaching I could have open the book and still emphasise on my own self but I did not do it ***(Participant 11, male, age 18)***.

My teachers they don't teach us very well ***(Participant 14, male, age 16)***

Participants' views about what factors are most constituent of academic performance are illustrated by the following quotes.

Is firstly our teachers, the way they taught us, I can't understand it so I will put the blame on my teachers ***(Participant 3, female, age 15)***.

Evil people and even neighbour, my friends will corrupt me; and fear from learning ***(Participant 4; Female; age 15)***.

Participants' attitudes about the help that they receive are reflected by the following quotes.

I am happy when the teacher explain better to me **(Participant 15, male, age 17)**.

Participants' views about how satisfied they feel when they receive help are reflected by the following quotes.

Yes this things make you happy **(Participant 15, male, age 17)**.

Finally, participants' understandings about what controls their outcomes are illustrated by the following quotes.

Is the teachers you know so a times a good student can write, really write the the correct answers and the teachers are like, I don't really like this student you know. She's not this, this not that and they just fail you ***(Participant 9, female, age 18).***

Is by luck because some of the things that I wrote I'm not sure of them but God help me to make it ***(Participant 7, female, age 17)***.

Because if I look from the generation, from my fore fathers, none of them have become good in the family and my mum told me that my uncle say we will never become something in the future so that is what I think that play a great role in my academic, that is what I think that play a great role, a great role in determining what happen in my study. ***(Participant 8, female, age 17)***.

4.4.4 Reducing the raw information

In this second stage of coding, the researcher reviewed the preliminary codes outlined above and rearranged the , smaller code group, into a larger codes new group, according to thoughts that were meaningful, as gauged from

participants' utterances. These codes were made into phrases. I grouped them into what participants thought were responsible for their attitudes and behaviours. For instance, are illustrated by the following.

Position of locus of control of participant (are culture and age factors)?

Position of locus of control

What participants think is responsible if they do not do well in their study?

1. =family backgrounds
2. =Lost self
3. =low self-concept, fear
4. = Peer pressure

What certain beliefs participant reported that affect academic performance?

1. =negative beliefs
2. =influence from relatives
3. = fear of the unknown

Other factors participant think are responsible for their grades in school.

1. = Teacher's attitudes
2. =self exclusively
3. = much domestic work

This procedure helped me to generate codes into different categories according to the research questions. Systematically, each category was

ascribed to sub-heading statements that summarised a group of codes. These were developed into my themes.

4.4.5 Identifying themes

All 20 participants for the semi-structured interview transcripts were coded and collated into different codes identified across the data. The codes concerned the beliefs that participants reported that affect their study habits and academic performance. This step re-focused the analysis into a broader level, enabling the identification of themes. All the relevant coded data were categorised into these 5 identified themes:

Theme 1: Negative self-concept

Theme 2: Parental attitudes and family background

Theme 3: Peer pressure

Theme 4: Discouragement from relatives and neighbours

Theme 5: Institutional factors.

4.5 Code validation reliability

The percentage agreement method was used for estimating inter-rater reliability of the scoring the semi-structured interview data, meeting all conditions themes and codes, since the number of themes coded are few to ascertain its consistency (Boyatzis, 1998). This method entails having different viewers at different sitting, read and observe the information and allocate the same set of themes and codes to the information within the same period of time (Kirk & Miller, 1986, in Boyatzis, 1998). This type of inter-rater reliability is suitable for this research as the numbers of themes coded are few and the

observed situations are few not more than 20 participants.

For the inter-rater procedure, the researcher employed five of her colleagues who had experience and pre-knowledge of qualitative research. Five of the 20 transcripts were given to each inter-rater (25% of the total number of transcripts, gathered between 27/08-11/2011 in Nigeria. Detailed explanations about the research aims and objectives and the research questions were given to the raters. At the end of the exercise review, they came up with similar themes, not in terms of using the exact same words as mine, but capturing the same conceptual meaning. They revealed that negative beliefs, peer pressure, and background themes were all constituent of academic performance. They were able to see the source of the attitudinal behaviour of each participant towards study habits. Although each inter-rater had different ways of expressing their opinion, they gave qualitatively equivalent interpretations, which indicates the validity of the percentage agreement method.

4.6 Themes identified

Qualitative data analysis resulted in the identification of a number of themes that emerged from the data. The themes that emerged may be divided into five categories: (1) negative self-concept, (2) parental attitudes and family background, (3) peer pressure, (4) discouragement from relatives and neighbours, and (5) institutional factors. Participants' responses were given in colloquial English and were transcribed verbatim. This follows the 'just word transcription method' which is concerned with describing precisely as posited

by participants (Jefferson, 1985; Hepburn, 2004) insist on the importance of this phonetic transcription. To accurately present participants' views, great care is needed in transcription as it is easy for errors to creep in that can lead to false implications (Kitzinger, 1998; Poland, 1995, 2002; Hamersley, 2010).

4.6.1 Theme 1: Negative self-concept

Many participants reported negative perceptions of themselves, concerning negative beliefs, negative self-appraisals and self-blaming attitudes that limited their ability to develop good study habits, such as reading, completing homework, and studying after a lecture. Research has shown that one's self-concept plays a significant role in shaping one's behaviour (Sampson, 1981; Smith & Bond, 1993). Mentions concerning such negative self-perceptions highlighted the importance of counselling students of secondary-school age about developing more effective study methods. During the counselling process, some participants expressed a fear of attempting to read and failing to understand the concepts being studied. For some, academic failure prompted a reflective process about their future ability to succeed academically. For others, poor performance was an immediate signal to give up. Some had developed a poor self-concept and expressed reluctance to try again. The following quotes from three participants reflect this theme of a negative self-concept.

> *It's because I don't take my studies serious. I don't read, I don't help myself, always go out to play, feel less concerned about my academic.* ***(Participant 2, female, age 18)***

I don't read and in the school I always play; I don't read my books I do not understand when the teacher is, is teaching ***(Participant 17, male, age 17)***

I don't really do my work because I don't really copy my notes; I'm not that fast in writing so by the time I can finish, you know, they might have clean the board. And also I feel, since I'm not that fast now let me just give up ***(Participant 19, male, age16).***

I'm always scared, I don't think I can do well because I don't understand whatever they're teaching me ***(Participant 14, male, age 16)***.

Influencing adolescents' behaviour and attitudes are the 'subjective' nature of adolescence to monitor their feelings and emotions, and to use the information to guide their thinking and actions, (Mayer, DiPaolo & Salovey, 1990). As one participant explains:

No, because I don't have time to read anytime I want to read I hurry up because I might be tired, let it just be that I opened my book to read cos when you are really tired you don't have much time to really pay attention during your studies ***(Participant 3, male, age 15)***

4.6.2 Theme 2: Parental attitudes and family background

Family background as described by 16 of the 20 participants was related as a central part of the problem underpinning the formation of poor self-perception, negative beliefs and poor study habits. Participants reported that, while attempting to study, they felt hesitant to ask their parents for assistance with their homework and other educational problems since their parents are lacking in the required education themselves. Participants described their parents as too poor to afford the material goods needed for school, while some explained that their parents culturally do not believe in the future benefits of education (Sue & Sue, 1980). Since their parents are not educated, they have low expectations about their children's academic performance and what they can achieve in life, that is, low parental aspirations. As one participant stated:

> *My parents are illiterate farmers. They don't have anything to do with education.* ***(Participant 4, female, age 15).***

> *They don't believe much in education and I work too much at home; sometimes I don't even have chance in reading. Sometimes when I want to read they will call and send me message* ***(Participant 11, male, age 18).***

Some participants stayed with guardians rather than with their biological or adoptive parents, and described how the guardian maltreated them when they returned from school by sending them to sell friuts on the streets without food, so that they lacked time and energy to attend to their studies. Specific problems that some participants encountered at home included: being made

to sell things along the road after school; having to help parents with farm work on a daily basis; returning home very late in the evenings, having been working on the farm, and being too tired to read. Five of the 20 participants mentioned that they were too busy at home with household chores and babysitting younger siblings to find time to study. These themes showed that most participants linked their beliefs and attitudes regarding their studies and academic performance to their family background. Students who experienced a lack of concern from their parents seemed to feel lost over their education and were unable to make the right decisions to develop good study habits and constructive attitudes for an enhanced academic performance.

4.6.3 Theme 3: Peer pressure

Fifteen participants reported peer pressure to be a prominent factor associated with their poor study habits and negative attitudes towards studying. While a sense of lacking direction in one's studies impacts behaviour, interaction with friends is arguably more powerful in that it affects the self-concept. Pressure to conform to peer behaviour leads to skipping classes, negative attitudes towards studying, and changes in perception. Some participants explained that they were unable to set their own schedule and make the decision to study, as these quotes from four participants illustrate:

> *I believe that is my friends that do all this things and we'll say I don't have time to read because when I want to study they won't allow me to study* ***(Participant 20, male, age 17).***

I believe since my friends are not educated me too I don't think I will be educated.

My friends they always tell me they, I should not even think, think about school and even though if I go to school where will I see work and work so all those things ***(Participant 8, female, age 17)***.

I don't use to read my books, I'm watching film always; I used to play with my friends. ***(Participant 6, female, age 16)***.

Is my friends, I do follow bad friends that doesn't go to school .My friends, we always discuss negatively not positively, things that have no benefit ***(Participant 1, female, age 15)***.

As stated by five participants, the prediction of friends that they would not succeed or get a job after school is related to them losing motivation and failing to seek assistance from classmates and others around them.

4.6.4 Theme 4: Discouragement from relatives and neighbours

Almost all participants reported that the perceived negative influences from people around them informed their beliefs about themselves. They expressed a fear about what others have said about them. Some participants specified that neighbours and relatives did not like them, had expressed scepticism about their going to school and making anything of themselves, and directed ill-will towards their families. Some attributed their poor study habits to spiritual

forces, believing that their relatives make them forget things (Trepal, 2010). One participant testified that she feared reading because she was afraid that her uncles might be using charms on her brains, causing her to not understand what she is reading. In her own words:

> *Our relations, they don't even like us to progress in this life. They don't want anything good for us so I don't know and if I read I don't even understand and most times when I begin to read I remember what my mother tells me. In short, I believe they are the one causing it. My father personally believe that I'll not make it, he is poor based on how he's not too fit to assist me; that's what has been bringing me down* ***(Participant 6, female, age 16)***.
>
> *My mum told me that my uncle say we will never become something in the future so that is what I think that play a great role in my academic, that is what I think that play a great role, a great role in determining what happen in my study* ***(Participant 18, male, age 16)***.

Another reported that his friends told him to leave school and that he should not think about his academic performance because he would not in any case succeed. In these instances, other people's opinions were seen as a determinant of their values and activities. The following participant is worth quoting at length:

> *Most of my friends are not educated you know. Even the ones that are educated they feel that mtchew even if you pass out [Sic – means pass*

exams] you know you won't have something to do, you won't have a job. So you know mtchew a times eeeh they do encourage me that I should not take it serious because if I finish I won't have a job to do. So a times mtchew I just think that education is a waste of time ***(participant 10, Male, age 19)***.

These quotes suggest that participants tend to link the discouragement they felt from family and neighbours to their lack of engagement and self-questioning regarding their study habits, reading books, and asking questions about different study methods, leading to reduced educational awareness.

4.6.5 Theme 5: Institutional factors

Apart from parents, peers, neighbours and relatives, there were influences associated with school that were said to contribute to poor study habits and low academic performance. Fifteen of the 20 participants mentioned the following school-related factors: teachers' attitudes, school authority, a noisy environment, and the way in which the examinations were set.

Some participants described teachers' nonchalant attitudes as a discouraging factor in the mutual exploration of issues concerning their study habits. They reported that teachers failed to consider students' perspectives and take contextual information into account for understanding concepts. They tended to blame teachers for not teaching well and not responding to questions when teaching. Some participants explained that they were unable to ask teachers for help on things that they do not understand for fear of being humiliated; they

reported that teachers tended to laugh and make mockery of them in the classroom. These participants believed that their teachers were responsible for their scholastic failure in that they refused to accept responsibility for helping them to adjustment their study habits. As three participants argued:

> *Teachers do not explain. They will say, well they're not going to do anything for you. If you like read if you don't like you shouldn't read as for me I've finished my own school* ***(Participant 5, female, age 18)****.*

> *My teachers are supposed to be serious with us, but they do not come to the class always to teach us. Throughout the semester, we were taught us only one topic of which is not right because during my exams they won't bring only question* ***(Participant 2, female, age 18)****.*

> *I will blame my teachers for they are not teaching us well. When you ask questions in the class, they will not be able to answer the question, even if you meet them in the staff room for them to answer the question they will send you away, may be they will be cursing you. So that is what I think is responsible; I don't do well in my academic* ***(Participant 13, male, age 15)****.*

Five of the 20 participants reported that their environment was very noisy. After lectures, they found it difficult to read whenever they were at home because of noisy neighbours. A disruptive environment is known to have a detrimental effect on students' cognitive and functioning (Bronzaft & McCarthy,

1975). Bronzaft (1981, 2011) found that when noise levels decrease, children's reading scores improve. These findings support the hypothesis that counselling would have significant effects on the study habits and locus of control of secondary school students.

Many participants reported improved study habits and confidence due to their experiences with the counsellor during the counselling programme. Over half indicated that their participation in the counselling education helped their understanding of the concepts (locus of control and study habits) better, and to realise that one of their basic premises as students is to grasp the main objective of study. Participants noted that receiving help from a professional counsellor encouraged them to develop and rely on their ability to try and work hard to attain better academic performance. As three participants commented:

> *I feel satisfied because when they explain, to your understanding you'll know more about what they're talking about* ***(Participant 6, female, age 16).***

These types of experiences seemed beneficial to participants' confidence and increased their abilities and beliefs to handle future studies. As two participants quoted:

> *"I'm happy when they explain more for me. I'm very very happy about that". (Participant female, age 16)*

> *"I'll be vely vely happy if I, if somebody will come and teach me and know how to do things I'll be very very happy" (participant, 14, male,*

age 17)

Students participating in the counselling education programme also seemed to experience an increased sense of modification of their study habits from less effective study habits to more effective study habits. One student explained that he tried to go back and do the right thing to master what he has just been taught so that he'll never forget it **(Participant 2, female, age 18).**

For the 20 participants of the study, one participant described her feeling about the process as follows:

> *I'm happy when I receive help from people because I think I'll improve* ***(Participant 14, male, age 16)***.

The counselling process seems to provide more opportunities for change in attitudinal, behavioural and cognitive processing (Gazda, 1989). Many shared beliefs that their participation was valuable to them on personal level.

Chapter 5

5.1 Discussion

While no previous research has been conducted specifically on the effects of counselling on students' study habits and locus of control, there are nonetheless some overlaps with previous research. Smith (2003), for example, reports that internal locus of control is related to higher academic achievement. However, given the nature of the issues examined in the present study, we were more interested in determining what moderating effects counselling may have on study habits and locus of control.

The findings from the qualitative study, to determine the effects of the counselling intervention, provides some insights into how student participants perceive their study habits and locus of control, based on before- and after-measures. The quantitative study, based on the four study habits and LOC instruments, provides insight into the factors (study habits and locus of control) that have a deleterious effect on students' academic performance.

Based on the quantitative study, comparing the control and the counselling groups' means and standard deviations for the before- and after-measures, there is some evidence that counselling for the purpose of actively exploring study habits and locus of control issues, with the goal of increasing participants' understanding of themselves, can alter attitudes, resulting in an improved academic presentation. Based on the qualitative analysis, two distinct explanations for locus of control were identified. Those with an internal

locus of control, six participants accepted responsibility for their studies (Theme 1) three participants mentioned both internal and external LOC in their utterances, while those with an external locus of control, eleven participants attributed their failure to powerful others: parents and guardians (Theme 2); peers (Theme 3); relatives and neighbours (Theme 4); and teachers' attitudes and other forces beyond their control, such as a noisy environment (Theme 5).

Interestingly, 15 participants in the counselling intervention group –after the individual interview session and the group counselling education session – indicated that the counselling process revealed their lack of knowledge about how to study and attributions to external forces. They found this to be an important part of their academic progress, and admitted their weakness related to academic performance and reported negative perceptions of themselves. Reviewing the literature on attitudes, Hogg and Vaughan (2008) conclude that people overestimate their good points and their control over events and are generally over-optimistic. However, the counselling process enabled participants to gain a better insight into their problems, and accept responsibility for where they had failed. Some participants that blamed themselves for not studying well and not understanding the concepts taught in the class accept to make amend to asked questions in class for better understanding. These findings suggest that it is important that teachers acquire the necessary training for providing counselling in education to assist their students effectively. The qualitative measure findings locus of control support the quantitative measure as the five participants categorised as having an external locus of control were similarly open and sincere about their

own cultural background and how their experiences influenced their low academic achievement. Self-disclosure is an essential part of facilitating self-awareness, thought to be a relatively enduring dispositional characteristic, although modifiable through experience (Findley & Cooper, 1983). However, the external LOC of participants during the individual interview session, showed a different pattern of perceptions in that they attributed their poor academic performance variously to: parents, peers, family and neighbours, and institutional factors. These findings have implications for professional school counsellors and teachers in the planning of strategic counselling interventions related to students' methods of studying and means of academic achievement.

Another interesting finding of the present research pertains to the scores of participants from the male control group on the Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ), on the following subscales: Time Management, Your Study Environment, Test Taking/Preparation Skills, Reading Skills, and Writing Skills. This group showed improvement without counselling. It is possible that the little knowledge they had from the questionnaire during the before-measure assessment is responsible coincidentally for this improvement.

Regarding gender differences in the results, female participants in the counselling group showed an improvement on the Study Habits Questionnaire on all sub-scales, as well as in their locus of control. They were more likely than males to report using effective methods of studying and improving their attitudes and study habits, as shown in Tables 1 and 2 in Chapter 4. Males, in

contrast, showed that there was a significant difference on the following measures: the Reading Question and Writing Question on the Study Habits Inventory (SHI); and all sub-scales on the Revised Study Process Questionnaire (RSPQ). One striking finding of the research is that males from the control group improved in their locus of control without counselling, while the counselling group who received counselling education did not.

However, there were more measures on which the scores of females and males remained unchanged after the counselling intervention. Given the small sample size, it cannot be concluded without caution that male and female students benefitted differentially from counselling interventions.

It has been hypothesised that age is one of the predictors of the position of locus of control and study habits (Ebenuwa-Okoh, 2010), considering that young people experience numerous emotional developmental changes (Ahmad, Baba, Hassan, & Shabani, 2011). Goleman (1998, in Ahmad et al., 2011) points out that as young people get older, emotional intelligence and cognitive ability increases, and better cognitive capabilities in adolescents are characterised by better adaptation in school. Ebenuwa-Okoh (2010) argues that cognitive development and emotional maturity (both of which are positively correlated with age) are necessary conditions for academic performance.

One of the most noted findings in this study, based on the frequency of mentions within the counselling group, was the influence of culture in terms of

student interactions with friends and those around them. Participants reported learning about socially acceptable beliefs from peer group influences and those in their cultural environment, such as parents and relatives. Given that the participants in this study were at an age in which they are still forming their identities, the influence of cultural experience on development is likely to provide a baseline for attitude-formation that affects their methods of studying (Jagers & Wood, 2003).

The interaction between parental attitudes and family background has been found to influence an individual's behaviour and personality (Mischel, Shoda & Smith, 2003). Similarly, in the present study, students identified parental attitudes and family background as a moderating factor that affects their study habits and locus of control. Family background influences may be conceptualised as those influences that affect student behaviours, and those that affect their self-concept, attitudes and beliefs (Bronzaft, 2011). Bennett (2006) conceded that the family is perhaps one of the most influential agents for developing a child's attitudes and values. Guardians were cited by four participants as a factor within family background that negatively impacted upon students' study habits; they were blamed for not appreciating that students need time to study, as seen from participants' complaints about excessive household chores, looking after siblings, and having to sell goods before going to school. Regarding those factors that affect their self-concept, attitudes and beliefs, participants cited a marked lack of moral support from parents and guardians, with some actively discouraging them from believing that they can do well at school. Students reported ruminating on the negative

things that others have told them. For example, one participant reported her aunt as saying that if she "read from now until tomorrow, she cannot make it because she is just too dumb". This finding supports previous research about the influence of parental involvement on academic achievement (see Perna & Titus, 2005). Overall, these findings point to the need for a more comprehensive approach to providing counselling services and education for Nigerian students at this level. Specifically, counselling programmes need to build confidence and empower participants, as well as assist them to become aware of the possibilities for managing, planning and setting goals to achieve their set objectives.

The findings from the counselling group showed that teacher behaviour is a major factor affecting students' study habits and locus of control. Flanagan (1997) expressed concern that little attention has been paid to the way in which students study in schools in the twenty-first century, in a world that now has more interactive tools and pedagogical approaches than ever before. Seventeen participants in the study described that teachers do not take responsibility for students' study habits or their attitudes towards studying. Most participants expressed concern about their teachers' behaviour and methods of teaching, implying that teacher behaviour falls short of their expectations. They reported that teachers are supposed to be serious about teaching but many teachers do not have a supportive attitude and many do not come to the class; sometimes only a single topic is taught throughout the entire semester. These findings point to the need for school counsellors to work with teachers as a means of providing better teaching methods and the

necessary motivation and support to students. These results have important implications for teachers because the educational setting is where young people's enthusiasm for learning and continued learning can be nurtured; it is where constructive attitudes towards life can be strengthened. Studies have found that the development of knowledge as well as good skills and attitudes can prepare students for a successful career and enhance their ability to manage themselves (e.g., Cottrell, 1999, 2003). The government and all those who have vested interest in the education of students should look into the cultural and / or socio-economic factors at work in Nigerian educational system.

Finally, the findings from this mixed-methods study indicate that students feel anxious about their ability to cope with learning situations and that they generally try to avoid them. School counsellors, teachers and parents/guardians need to establish educational programmes to help students to improve their locus of control and study habits in terms of: change of mind-set about learning/studying; persevering; adjusting to proper study habits and learning strategies; evaluating their own learning progress; maintaining a work-life balance; overcoming difficulties and developing strategic action plans. These finding clearly highlight the urgent need for school counsellors and teachers to provide students with the necessary information about different methods of and approaches to studying. Further research is needed to examine the effects of age and culture on participants' SH and LOC that determines academic performance.

5.2 Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from the results of the counselling intervention for the four research questions posed in Chapter 1.

5.2.1 Q1. What factors influence the position of locus of control (e.g. culture, gender and age factors)?

During the individual counselling session (a semi-structured interview), some participants reported that their parents devalued education in that it was not compatible with their religion or their cultural upbringing. Traditional beliefs, since some parents are farmers, they encourage the young to acquire specific vocational training and to develop attitude towards honest labour and also skills to help out in the farm (Fafunwa, 1994). The themes described by the counselling intervention group showed that most participants described the uncaring attitudes of their parent's towards their studies as one of the major factors to their poor performance, and linked their locus of control regarding their studies and academic failure to their family background. Students who experienced a lack of concern from their parents seemed to feel lost over their education and were unable to make the right decisions to develop good study habits and constructive attitudes for an enhanced academic performance. However, this point in the study so far has not been addressed; more exploration is needed in this area.

5.2.2 Q2. Is there a relationship between locus of control and study habits?

The results of the quantitative and qualitative (control and counselling group)

analysis suggested that there is a relationship between the two concepts. The scores on the Locus of Control scale for female counselling group (M=9.40, SD=2.22) were higher after the counselling intervention (M=12.10, SD=1.79), than did the male counselling before (M=12.20, SD=2.20) after (M=12.70, SD=2.11). This indicates that participants' attitudes to studying (in terms of locus of control) improved after the counselling intervention.

5.2.3 Q3. Can counselling cause a shift in position of locus of control?

While the results of the female counselling intervention group suggest that counselling can cause a shift in the position of locus of control, it is possible that there needs to be numerous counselling sessions over a period of many weeks or months in order to have a positive effect on students' locus of control, that is, in order to help students take responsibility for their studies and improve their self-efficacy regarding academic performance. It is also possible that long term counselling interventions services should be provided at an even younger age, in order to enhance the chance of their effectiveness.

5.2.4 Q4. What is the impact of counselling on the relationship between locus of control and study habits?

The impact of counselling on the relationship between these variables was shown from the improvement participants made on the after-measure assessments of the study habits questionnaires and locus of control scale.

5.3. Limitations of the research

This study has provided some useful insights about the concepts of study habits (SH) and locus of control (internal and external LOC) within the Nigerian education context. However, it is conceded that the study has a number of limitations.

First, a single individual 'counselling' intervention was used, followed by a group 'counselling' session, with the aim of modifying students' study habits and locus of control to enable improved academic performance. Arguably, a single session – whether individual or group – is insufficient to effect any significant changes in the areas of cognitive and psychological development. Conventionally, counselling is administered or sought for a specific length of time (usually fifty minutes or an hour) at a regular time every week for either a set period of time (often 6 to 12 weeks) or whatever time period is agreed by the counsellor and participant. In contrast, the individual 'counselling' session was in fact a semi-structured, face-to-face interview, lasting 45 minutes per student.

Using only one individual 'counselling' session did not strictly constitute counselling for two reasons. First, the procedure was not systematically followed to the end, due to the relatively short duration of time allocated for the study. To constitute counselling, the procedure needs to be a systematic developmental process following a series of steps that is administered over a period of about two to three months. Second, the individual sessions were used mainly to gather data from the participants about their study habits and

attitudes towards studying and education, using a semi-structured interview schedule. In contrast, counselling, from the counsellor's perspective, is about using a variety of techniques (such as asking questions and 'reflecting back') to help participant change their thoughts, feelings or behaviour to enhance their quality of life, or simply to explore and/or clarify their thoughts and feelings. From the participant's perspective, it is about talking to someone who is properly trained and has regular professional supervision (Feltham & Horton, 2012). The counsellor listens to the participant without imposing his or /her own values and beliefs on them, and gives the participant the space to explore their thoughts, feelings and behaviours to achieve the aims of the counselling programme.

The purpose of the group 'counselling' session was to educate participants about study methods, effective time management, goal-setting, planning, and learning styles, and to make recommendations for improving attitudes towards studying. For the same reasons as explained above, a single group session to instruct students about cognitive, affective and behavioural changes does not strictly amount to counselling.

In terms of the sample, only 40 students nominated by head teacher in year 5 were included in the study. A convenience sampling strategy was used. Given the relatively small sample size, and the fact that participants were drawn only from class 5 academic under-achieving students from three schools only, it is difficult to generalise these findings to all Nigerian secondary school students.

4. 4. Recommendations for future work

1a. Increase in sample size

Future studies should include 6 more schools from rural areas and from urban areas, across different geographical locations in Nigeria. This will help to ensure that the sample is representative of secondary school students in Nigeria. The classes selected for the intervention should include those that are under-achieving academically, as well as those (if any) that are not. A greater number and wider range of participants will help the researcher to gain more insight into prevailing study habits and locus of control patterns in Nigerian students, with the aim of revealing: individual beliefs, thought systems or worldviews, and the role of cultural variables, such as dependency on others as opposed to self-determination. This will enable focus and refinement in the selection of the relevant study methods to be included in the group education session, in addition to the teaching about study methods, effective time management, goal-setting and planning that was employed in the present study.

1b. Control group

In this study, students' study habits, skills and attitudes, as well as the position of their locus of control, were measured before and after and teaching education session. The session for the counselling group consisted of a 45-minute individual interview asking students about their SH and LOC, and a group counselling education session of 60-minutes' duration, teaching students about study methods, effective time management, goal-setting, planning, and learning styles and making recommendations for improving

habits and attitudes. Approximately one week after the before-measure (comprising four questionnaires), the interventions were administered. Six weeks after the completion of the group intervention, the students were administered the four questionnaires again, to measure any changes in their SH and LOC. A weakness of the study was that there was not a enough time used to test whether the two counselling interventions had an effect on students' SH and LOC.

The positive result shown from the quantitative analysis both groups (counselling and control group), might simply have been students' familiarity with SH and LOC terms which enabled them to respond to the questionnaires differently in the after-measure stage, or the attention that they received from the researcher and her research assistant which prompted them to modify their responses (as per the Hawthorn effect). Thus, for future study, more time should be included. It is hypothesised that the SH and LOC of the control group will remain unchanged, while those of the treatment group will change in a positive direction, that is, more effective study habits and a more internal LOC, reflecting more positive attitudes towards studying.

In addition, academic performance was evaluated only in terms of academic records and annual progress report by head-teachers' nominating students in classes 5 that were under-performing academically. This is an insufficiently refined measure of academic performance, given that no data were collected about the academic performance of the other classes within each school. A more robust measure of academic performance should include three

measures: (a) whether the student has advanced from one grade (Class 4) to the next (Class 5); (b) whether the student performs satisfactorily on assessments (continuous assessment within the term); (c) the end-of-year examination results of each participant for each school subject taken.

2. Parents and guardians to be included

During the individual counselling sessions, it was indicated that students who experienced a lack of concern regarding their education from their parents and guardians seemed to feel lost over their education and were unable to make the right decisions to develop good study habits and constructive attitudes for an enhanced academic performance. Future research should include interviewing a cross-section of the participants' parents and guardians about their attitudes towards their children's education. Given the generally poor attitudes and low aspirations that were reported of parents and guardians by participants in the individual interviews, a questionnaire approach is unlikely to be effective, therefore face-to-face interviews should be used. Parents/guardians should be asked to volunteer to be interviewed, although it should be noted that any self-selection might contain biases in the views expressed.

3. Teachers' views solicited

In this study, 16 out of 20 students perceived the attitude of their teachers to be unsupportive. A two-day educational workshop should be conducted for the teachers who are involved in students' education in the participating schools. This should be an interactive session with teachers to gain more in-depth

views on teachers' attitudes to learning and their perception of students' attitudes and study habits, and their perceived reasons for students' poor academic performance. These procedures are likely to provide insight into how the findings of the research might be used to formulate policies for modifying both teachers' and students' study attitudes towards studying, with the overall objective of improving the educational performance of the students.

4. More counselling sessions

Finally, the intervention administered needs to constitute bona fide counselling. Accordingly, three individual counselling sessions of 60 minutes' duration should be administered individually to each participant by a professionally trained counsellor, with each session held one week apart. Three more group counselling education sessions should be administered one week after all the individual counselling sessions are completed. The aim of the group education session should be to reinforce any positive changes in their thoughts, feelings or behaviours regarding their studies and to clarify their thoughts and feelings towards their education and capabilities.

The after-measure assessment should entail administering the four questionnaires 3 weeks after the group education session has been administered to ascertain the goal of the process.

Appendix Section 1-5

Section 1

1 a Information sheet

Effects of counselling on study habits and locus of control

These research questionnaires information on study habits you are about to fill are investigating the effect of counselling on student's application of study habits and locus of control. This research is carried out as part of doctoral study.

The research considers the protection of all human participants, and no harm will be done to you in any way. The following information is provided for you to decide whether you wish to participate in the present study. You should be aware that even if you agree to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without consequence.

There will be within-subject design; before and after counselling assessment.There will be individual and group counselling, the individual counselling will help participants develop self-confidence and expression of their feelings. Group counselling will provide participants the opportunities to learn from other people and be able to understand their own patterns of thoughts and behaviours, as well as those of others. It will help them see attitudes and behaviour patterns that are limiting and difficult to see in self. It will also enable participants to experiment and work towards improved attitudinal changes.

The intervention measure approach will be through education, training, interaction, and counselling technique that can influence perception and

behavioural change.

The research will employ the use of qualitative interview method, and quantitative assessment. The qualitative method will allow participants express their thoughts and feelings that can be used to assess their progress throughout the counselling process.

The researcher assures you that your name will not be connected in any way with the research findings. The information will not be trace to you.

You will respond to each of the questions in the three sections given accordingly. The whole task will take you only about 10-15minutes to complete.

In this research, you will be required to complete this form a second time later to find out the progress of the research.

Your agreement to take part in this research will be of great value to the completion of the entire research work. If you wish to contact the researcher on any issue concerning the research, feel free to email patricia.ikiriko@study.beds.ac.uk, or phone 01582743154 for clarifications.

Participant Details

Name: _____

Signature: _____s_____

Date: _____

Researcher's Contact:

Patricia .O. Ikiriko

Psychology Department

University of Bedfordshire

Luton, LU1 3JU

1. b Consent letter

The nature and purpose of this study has been explained to me. I understand that I will be asked to complete three questionnaires. I understand that the data are being collected secretly and responses cannot be traced to me.

I hereby consent to participate in the study.

Participant Details

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researcher's Contact:

Patricia .O. Ikiriko

Psychology Department

University of Bedfordshire

Luton, LU1 3JU

UNITED KINGDOM

Email: patricia.ikiriko@beds.ac.uk

Phone:

UK:+44 (0) 1582743154`````````` Nigeria: (+234) 8033100790

Thank you for your participation in this research.

1c Start Sheet

Please Fill in The Three Boxes Below:

Age	Gender (Male/Female)	Ethnicity

Section 2 Questionnaires

2a)

Locus of Control Scale (Rotter)

1. a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.
b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.

2. a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.
b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

3. a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.
b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.

4. a. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.
b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.

5. a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.
b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.

6. a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.
b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.

7. a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.
b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.

8. a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.
b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.

9. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.

10. a. In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.
b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying in really useless.

11. a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.

12. a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.
b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.

13. a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.

14. a. There are certain people who are just no good.
b. There is some good in everybody.

15. a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.
b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.

16. a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.

b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability, luck has little or nothing to do with it.

17. a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor controls

b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.

18. a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.

b. There really is no such thing as "luck."

19. a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.

b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.

20. a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.

b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.

21. a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.

b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.

22. a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.

b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.

23. a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.

b. There is a direct connection between how hard 1 study and the grades I get.

24. a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they

should do.

b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.

25. a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.

b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.

26. a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.

b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.

27. a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.

b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.

28. a. What happens to me is my own doing.

b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.

29. a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.

b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.

2b)

Revised Study Process Questionnaire (R-SPQ-2F)

This questionnaire has a number of questions about your attitudes towards your studies and your usual way of studying.

There is no right way of studying. It depends on what suits your own style and

the course you are studying. It is accordingly important that you answer each question as honestly as you can. If you think your answer to a question would depend on the subject being studied, give the answer that would apply to the subject(s) most important to you.

Please fill in the appropriate circle alongside the question number on the 'General Purpose Survey/Answer Sheet'. The letters alongside each number stand for the following response.

A—this item is never or only rarely true of me

B—this item is sometimes true of me

C—this item is true of me about half the time

D—this item is frequently true of me

E—this item is always or almost always true of me

Please choose the one most appropriate response to each question. Fill the oval on the Answer Sheet that best fits your immediate reaction. Do not spend a long time on each item: your first reaction is probably the best one. Please answer each item. Do not worry about projecting a good image. Your answers are CONFIDENTIAL.

Thank you for your cooperation.

1. I find that at times studying gives me a feeling of deep personal satisfaction.

2. I Ž find that I have to do enough work on a topic so that I can form my own conclusions before I am satisfied.

3. My aim is to pass the course while doing as little work as possible.

4. I only study seriously what's given out in class or in the course outlines.

5. I feel that virtually any topic can be highly interesting once I get into it.

6. I Ž find most new topics interesting and often spend extra time trying to

obtain more

information about them.

7. I do not Žfind my course very interesting so I keep my work to the minimum.

8. I learn some things by rote, going over and over them until I know them by heart even if

I do not understand them.

9. I Žfind that studying academic topics can at times be as exciting as a good novel or

movie.

10. I test myself on important topics until I understand them completely.

11. I Žfind I can get by in most assessments by memorising key sections rather than trying to

understand them.

12. I generally restrict my study to what is specifically set as I think it is unnecessary to do

anything extra.

13. I work hard at my studies because I Žfind the material interesting.

14. I spend a lot of my free time Žfinding out more about interesting topics which have been

discussed in different classes.

15. I Žfind it is not helpful to study topics in depth. It confuses and wastes time, when all you

need is a passing acquaintance with topics.

16. I believe that lecturers shouldn't expect students to spend significant

amounts of time

studying material everyone knows won't be examined.

17. I come to most classes with questions in mind that I want answering.

18. I make a point of looking at most of the suggested readings that go with the lectures.

19. I see no point in learning material which is not likely to be in the examination.

20. I Ž find the best way to pass examinations is to try to remember answers to likely questions.

2c)

The Study Habits Inventory

Answer the questions below as honestly as possible. Read each of the explanation sections (below), and try to figure out what you do well and what you might try to improve. Choose a specific suggestion in each section (studying, reading, and writing) that you will try to include in your future studying, reading, and writing.

Studying Questions

1.) I study course material... (choose one)

a.) several times a week, even if for short time periods.

b.) once a week.

c.) only before the test.

2.) I study the lecture slides.... (choose all that apply)

a.) before the lecture.

b.) after the lecture.

c.) before the test.

d.) never.

3.) When I study, I ... (choose all that apply)

a.) read my notes, read the lecture slides, or read the assigned readings.

b.) try to write answers study questions, and then check them against my notes, the lecture slides, and/or the readings.

c.) create diagrams or draw arrows between key concepts.

d.) try to explain the ideas and arguments out loud or to my friends.

e.) try to generate examples of key ideas from my own experience.

f.) none of the above.

4.) During lectures and small group meetings I... (choose all that apply)

a.) ask questions to help me better understand the material.

b.) take notes by copying the slides.

c.) take notes on the lectures slides or lecture outlines.

d.) listen for clarifications and examples that are not on the lecture slides.

e.) write or draw connections between ideas, slides, or key words.

f.) none of the above.

5.) If I have trouble understanding material in

the course, I...

a.) search the internet looking for alternative materials.

b.) ask clarificatory questions about the material in class.

c.) consult the materials cited by the readings or lecture.

d.) look for articles by the figures discussed in class using one of the library databases.

e.) go to office hours.

Reading Questions

1.) I read the assigned readings... (choose all that apply)

a.) before the lecture.

b.) after the lecture.

c.) before the test.

d.) never.

2.) I read the assigned readings... (choose all that apply)

a.) never.

b.) once.

c.) more than once.

3.) When I read the course material I... (choose all that apply)

a.) start by looking over the material noticing headings, sub-headings, bolded text, diagrams, etc..

b.) read the introductory and summary paragraphs.

c.) use a highlighter and/or make textual notes.

d.) try to outline the text as I read it.

e.) just try to read it.

f.) none of the above.

4.) When I come across a word or phrase in the text with which I'm unfamiliar, I... (choose all that apply)

a.) just continue on, or stop reading.

b.) try to determine its meaning from the context of the passage.

c.) look up the meaning in the lexicon or other resource.

d.) determine the word's meaning and review the sentence or passage so that

I'm sure I understand it.

e.) determine the word's meaning and then make a textual note about the meaning.

f.) determine the word's meaning and then rewrite the sentence in my own words.

g.) make a note of the word and its meaning for review.

Writing Questions

1.) In writing an answer to an in-class exam question, I... (choose all that apply)

a.) start by carefully reading the entire question, marking important or familiar words and concepts.

b.) start writing after reading the first sentence or prompt.

c.) read all the questions, and start writing on the question with which I am most comfortable.

d.) read the question, then consider how the question relates to the lectures on that topic.

2.) In writing an answer, I... (choose all that apply)

a.) work out every detail of the answer in my head before writing.

b.) work out a general outline of my answer before writing.

c.) proceed through the question from prompt to prompt, writing the answer as I read each prompt.

3.) In writing an answer to the question, I... (choose all that apply)

a.) try to illustrate my understanding of the material through the use of examples.

b.) assume the professor knows what I'm talking about.

c.) define all course-specific terms as part of my answer.

d.) write my answer as a self-contained, concise essay any intelligent person could read and follow.

4.) After writing an answer, I... (choose all that apply)

a.) move on to the next question.

b.) read the answer looking for content errors, grammar errors, and unaddressed prompts.

c.) read the answer twice; once for content errors and missing information, and once for grammar, spelling, and etc..

d.) read the answer, checking the answer against the question and my rough outline for completeness and correctness.

e.) return to the course materials and look them over again, comparing them to my answer.

5.) If I have trouble understanding material in the course of writing, I...

a.) search the internet looking for alternative materials.

b.) ask clarificatory questions about the material in class.

c.) consult the materials cited by the readings or lecture.

d.) look for articles by the figures discussed in class using one of the library databases.

6.) I include a source in my bibliography when...

a.) I quoted the from the source.

b.) I paraphrased from the source.

c.) never.

d.) I found a result or example in the source.

e.) I found the source helpful in formulating my answer, but didn't quote, paraphrase, or use any results or examples from the source.

2d) Study Habits Questionnaire

Find attached hard copy of this questionnaire on the appendix.

Section 3

Detailed description of the introductory group session

The following information and instructions were given in simple English to the 20 participants in the introductory session.

Good morning, and welcome to this special programme. Thank you for taking time to join us to talk about the educational programme in Nigeria. My name is Patricia Ikiriko and assisting me is Mr Francis Mgbonta. The entire programme will be a month and a half. Introduction sessions will be 30 minutes, questionnaires 1hour total of 1.5hours today.

The reason we are here today is to ask your opinions and attitudes about issues related to the educational programme; in particular the effects of study habits counselling on locus of control among African senior secondary students in Nigeria. Your school was chosen as one of the centres.

Before we proceed, I would like to define the terms "study habits" and "locus of control". ***Study Habits*** *are the methods or ways of maintaining a dedicated study schedule and ensuring uninterrupted time for studying and learning to attain the aims of studying; when you read, you skim the surface; but when you study, you discover the treasure within the context of study.* ***Locus of control*** *is the way a person attributes causation or blame for events that happen in their life. Rotter (1954) defined this concept in terms of two*

categories: internal and external locus of control. A person with an internal LOC takes responsibility for what happens to him or her as their own fault and works to make amends wherever they failed, whereas a person with an external LOC may blame others, outside of himself or herself.

I am going to lead our discussion in all the sessions. There will be two sessions in this programme: an individual counselling session, where the researcher will meet with you one-on-one, and a group counselling education session. I am not here to convince you of anything or try to change your opinion on anything; the reason why I am here is to ask you questions about yourselves, encourage you to give your thoughts, views, and feelings, and to moderate our discussion. You will be completing four questionnaires today, before the individual counselling session, and another set of the same questionnaires again after the group counselling education session.

I am with the University of Bedfordshire in the United Kingdom, currently undertaking Doctorate Degree, seeking to find out the extent to which counselling can be used to alter students' perceptions, study habits, cognitions, and determine how academic performance might be improved.

You were selected for this research because you have taken some examinations in the school, so you are familiar with the term "study habits". I would like to know the extent to which this discussion can help change your perceptions, methods of study habits, study style, and attitudes towards improved academic performance.

I would also like to let you know that, in all the sessions, we will use a tape-recorder to record all our discussions for my report. People often say very helpful things during these discussions and we can't write fast enough to get everything down. Mr Mgbonta and researcher will be tape-recording the sessions because we don't want to miss any of your comments or the information that you provide.

In these sessions, all discussions will be confidential in that I will not report your names or who said what to anyone. Your names will not even be included in the final report about this meeting. It also means that, except for the report that will be written, our discussions will not be mentioned in any way. In these sessions, we want you to be open and honest and free to make comments. You will not be judged or condemned so please do not be anxious.

We would like you to introduce yourself on a first name basis, although we won't use any names in our reports. You may be assured of complete confidentiality. The reports will be helpful to me for planning future programmes that will enhance educational progress for you and others.

Please, when you walk out of this room, do not discuss issues we have talked about here to anyone else. We want absolute confidentiality from you. However, let's begin by introducing yourselves to find out a little more about each other. Please tell us your name and where you live. We're on a first name basis

Ground Rules

To allow our conversation to proceed in an orderly manner, I'd like to go over some expected ways in which we ought to behave throughout the duration of the research process.

1. Only one person is to speak at a time.

2. Please avoid side conversations.[6]

3. You don't have to answer every single question, but I'd like to hear from each of you at some point today as the discussion progresses.

Guidelines

1. Regarding the questions we will be asking you, there is no right or wrong answer; feel free to express your views.

2. We will be tape-recording and taking notes of all our discussions with one person speaking at a time.

3. You don't need to agree with others, but you must listen respectfully as others share their views.

4. Please turn off your cellular phones or pagers during the sessions.

My role as moderator will be to guide the discussions. You are allowed to use the toilet any time should you want to do so.

You will be completing six different documents:

---

[6] *Mr Mgbonta is here to assist researcher in recording the counselling proceedings as it was difficult for only the researcher coordinating all the procedures alone.*

1. A consent form

2. A start sheet

3. Four questionnaires

The introductory session ended with a 10-minute video of the inspirational story of an American neurosurgeon Dr Benjamin Carlson, who struggled academically throughout primary school, but started to excel in middle school and throughout high school. He went on to attend Yale University and University of Michigan Medical School, and receive many awards over the years.

Section 4

A) Study Habits and Locus of Control Interview Protocol

1. BIOGRAPHICS

1a. state how long participant's has been in the school

1b. state age of participants

2a. state participant's school

2b. state participant's class

1.) What factors control the position of locus of control (are culture and age factors)?

- How long have you been in this school? And how old are you?
- What do you think is responsible if you do not do well in your examination?
- In terms of your interaction with your friends and parents, how would you describe your beliefs and the outcome of your academic performance?
- In your own understanding, do you think your grades are a good indication of your personal effort?
- What qualities do you feel a successful student should possess?
-

2.) What is the impact of counselling on the causal link between locus of control and effective study habits?

- What are the things that makes you happy or not with your school work? (Probe) mention at least three things that make you happy?
- What do you think causes the problem that you are not doing well on your studies?
- Do you think the problem with your low grade is your fault or the way the examination questions were set?
- How satisfied are you when you receive help from a professional?
- Do you adjust your reading styles when you are reading after you have been taught by a professional?
- Do you study on your own after taking lecture or your tests to review for errors and mistakes? (Probe) describe how.
- Do you seek for help if you do not know what to do when going through your work after lecture?

3.) Is there a relationship between locus of control and effective study habits?

- What do you think play a large role in getting what you want out of your study?
- What do you often feel that have control over your academic performance?
- How many pages do you read each day at school and from your homework?
- Can you explain how often you study daily?
- What happen in your studies, are they of your own doing?

4.) Can counselling cause a shift in position of the locus of control?

- How much time do you spend on your homework?
- From your experience, how can you explain how you feel when you receive help on things you do not understand?
- How frequently do you discuss your studies with your parents/teacher? (Probe) how satisfied where you?
- Do you feel that you have control over your examination outcome (probe) how?
- Do you believe that your final examination result is by luck or chance? (Probe) why?
- What do think that play a great role in determining what happens in your study?

4 b Coding Scheme Identified

1. BIOGRAPHICS

1a. state how long participant's has been in the school

1b. state age of participants

2a. state participant's school

2b. state participant's class

2. **Position of locus of control of participant (are culture and age factors)?**

Position of locus of control

What participants think is responsible if they do not do well in their study?

5. =family backgrounds
6. =Lost self
7. =low self-concept, fear
8. = Peer pressure

What certain beliefs participant reported that affect academic performance?

4. =negative beliefs
5. =influence from relatives
6. = fear of the unknown

Other factors participant think are responsible for their grades in school.

5. = Teacher's attitudes
6. =self exclusively

7. = much domestic work

3. What is the impact of counselling on the causal link between locus of control and study habits?

Impact of counselling on locus of control and study habits

Causal link between locus of control and study habits

Impact of counselling on locus of control and study habits

The major thing participant mentioned as constituent of academic performance

1. = Subjective fundamentals
2. = Influential fundamentals
3. =Subjective fundamentals & Influential fundamentals

4) How does participant describe their relationship between locus of control and study habits?

Relationship between locus of control and study habit

What participant mentioned played major role in their study?

1. =fear to read
2. =environment always noisy=environmental effects
3. =procrastination
4. =background

What participants feel have control on their study

1. = Bad influence
2. =spiritual forces
3. = Laziness, lack of focus

Reasons participants gave for this control

1. =my parents disturb me (family background)
2. =Parents not educated
3. =Procrastination
4. =.Negative influence

What participants described as responsible for their study?

1. =school authorities.....
2. = Lack of reading
3. = luck

5) Can counselling cause a shift in position of the locus of control?

Counselling effects on locus of control?

How counselling shift position of locus of control

How much time participant spend on home work?

1. =nonchalant attitudes
2. =domestic chores
3. =Laziness

What participants explained when they receive help?

1. =satisfied
2. =self-worth
3. =fulfilled

How satisfied participant feel when they receive help?

1. =very satisfied
2. =excited
3. =very happy

What things that make participant not satisfied?

1. =lost self
2. =Teachers attitudes
3. =parental attitudes

Do participants believe examination is either by luck or chance?

1. =intuition
2. =cheating

What participant explain have control over their outcome?

=charm

=parental educational background

=self

=fear

=Peers influence,

=family background

Section 5

Patricia Ikiriko Proposed Technique Of Studying: B.R.E.A.K.S

BREAKS is a proposed technique of studying that entails the application of effective study approaches to the type of learning that is necessary for good academic achievement. BREAKS is an acronym describing the main features or keywords of this process: **B**reak down, **R**eadable, **E**asy, **A**chievable, **K**nowable and **S**tructured. The technique encompasses breaking down large topics into smaller, more concise parts noting key words for easy retention and recall. As Mandino (1985:65) states: "In truth, one step at a time is not too difficult... I know that small attempts, repeated, will complete any undertaking".

Target audience

This article is for students and anyone interested in achieving excellence in their educational career. Those in junior and high school, college and post-graduate students, parents/guardians, and even teachers and tutors may find it helpful for solving various study-related problems such as planning, time-management, procrastination, and applying self-motivation strategies.

Main objectives of studying

The goals of academic pursuit are to: improve one's competency in a particular area of study; enhance one's personal and social development; develop self-awareness; critically understand the substantive content of a subject; read and communicate effectively; and attain academic success for a

better quality of life.

Students need to be aware of what is most important in studying, for instance, developing an interest in, if not a passion for, the study materials, and planning for effective time management. It is also helpful for them to have a particular grade in mind in order to achieve their objectives. They might also keep in mind the professional qualification they would like to attain or the occupational field in which they would like to work. This will help them to discover the purpose and relevance of what is being studied.

Purpose of BREAKS

The method involves **B**reaking down information into forms which are **R**eadable, **E**asy, **A**chievable, **K**nowable and **S**tructured. It is proposed that this method assists the process of organising knowledge, including the acquisition of new information and assessment of different subject matters. As mentioned above, this concept is captured by the acronym BREAKS. Its purpose is to facilitate effective reading and concentration as well as an improved rate of assimilation of important material within a study topic. Further, it can be used as a learning drill to aid memorisation and retention of information.

The BREAKS technique has the potential to help students to: investigate and analyse a subject in detail; increase their knowledge and retention of this knowledge; critically analyse and interpret complex information; select the relevant learning style and method suitable for studying; develop a sense of direction and purpose; and assess their ability or understanding of a topic or

theme.

Method related to learning style

The BREAKS method entails different techniques that can be tweaked according to one's learning style. Learning style refers to the approach by which a learner prefers to learn, for example, by active listening, drawing, and/or note-taking. In education, learning styles are less concerned with *what* learners learn than with *how* they prefer to learn. Keefe (1979) explains that learning style comprises cognitive, affective and psychological factors that are stable indicators of how an individual learner perceives, interacts with, and responds to his or her learning environment. Bloom (1976) contends that a learner's learning style is determined by their unique abilities. On the hand other, Stewart and Felicetti (1992) describe learning style as those educational conditions under which a student is most likely to learn. Identification of an individual's style of learning is important for enhancing students' performance in a variety of contexts. Individual differences in the learner and the learning environment are typically studied within the field of differential psychology, which studies the ways in which *individuals* differ in their behaviour (as opposed to groups or the biological substrates of cognition) (Jonassen & Grabowski, 1993). The cognitive characteristics of an individual are related to their attitudes in that an individual's attitudes influence their perception, thinking, behaviour, and actions (Bohner & Wanke, 2002; LaPiere, 1934; Ajzen, 2001). The psychology of attitudes is based on the psychological processes and cognitive structures of individuals; attitudes can also be the product of group e.g stereotypes (Bohner & Wanke, 2002; Eagle & Chaiken,

1993). Attitudes refer to affective evaluations of life circumstances while cognitions refer to knowledge and beliefs (Ridding & Rayner 2009). Thus, a method of studying needs to focus equally on cognitions (the intellectual content that one is studying) and attitudes (one's motivations towards studying a particular subject). Three broad learning styles may be distinguished:

1. Visual learners
2. Auditory learners
3. Kinaesthetic learners

Visual learners: These learners understand taught concepts predominantly in terms of visually perceived written materials such as hand-outs, texts books and other literature that contains words, pictures, graphs, maps, charts, and other visual aids that they can see. It is visual or graphic representations that they remember most easily and assimilate well. These students also tend to have a sharp, clear picture of the experiences that they encounter in the classroom.

Auditory learners: These students tend to learn best by listening. They prefer to learn through audio messages, lectures in class, seminars, discussions, social interaction, and by reading aloud to themselves. They remember things that they hear generally more than things that they see. In class they remember group discussions and participations. This is because they identify sounds related to an experience more than images of the experience.

Kinaesthetic/ tactile learners: These students learn best through physical

experiments in the laboratory and by touching, feeling and experiencing that which they are trying to learn. Students in this group remember things by writing about or touching the learning object. Through their interaction in the classroom they develop a strong feeling towards the experience.

Often students use more than one learning style. A meta-study by Marzano (1998) found that graphic and tactile representations of the subject matter had noticeable effects on learning outcomes for both kinaesthetic/ tactile and visual learners. Similarly, Constantinidou and Baker (2002) found that visual presentation through the use of pictures was advantageous not only for those with a visual style of learning but also for most adults who are kinaesthetic/ tactile learners. This suggests that, while each learner might have a preferred style, it is possible that the process of producing visual or graphic representations of study materials could be beneficial for all learners regardless of their learning style.

Assumptions

The concept of BREAKS refers to a process of learning designed to enable students to improve their 'grip' on the materials under study and work effectively towards achieving the main objectives of studying, as outlined above. It is proposed that the most effective way for a student to make progress is by being actively involved with the material. This can be by visual, auditory or tactile means.

Significance and distinguishing characteristics

A variety of study techniques exist based on different modalities, as depicted in the table below (Cottrell, 1999; Marzano, 1998; Riding & Rayner, 1998).

Modality on which study method is based	**Technique for learning**
Memorisation	rehearsal and rote learning
communication skills	reading and listening
cues	flashcard training
condensing information	summarising and the use of keywords
exam strategies	acronyms and mnemonics
time management, organisation and lifestyle changes	tables, schedules, indexes
visual imagery	drawings, spider diagrams

However these study methods in the literature fail to address the psychological factors which affect students. The BREAKS technique is unique because it addresses a wide scope of issues confronting students which can inhibit their academic performance. It is not just studying techniques that can affect students' results, but also psychological, hidden factors that must be identified in order to alter cognitions. Most students in the bottom 80% make no effort to improve their skills, memory, and academic performance. They tend not to improve because of their on-going lack of interest in the subject, their poor productivity, and their nonchalant attitude towards their studies. In contrast many top-performing students take the trouble to go through their lecture notes and the recommended readings after each lecture. BREAKS represent a constructive method that students can use to build up their

motivation and interest in the subject matter.

Theoretical underpinning

The BREAKS method could be compared with a humanistic approach to education. Within the humanist tradition, Kirshenbaum and Henderson (1989) developed the theory of facilitative learning. The basic premise of facilitation theory is that learning will occur by the educator acting as a facilitator and establishing an atmosphere in which learners feel comfortable with considering new ideas and are not threatened by external factors (Laird, 1985; Cottrell, 2003). BREAKS can help learners to increase their familiarity with the key concepts comprising any particular topic, and thereby feel less threatened by new concepts.

Scope

The technique may necessitate a re-organisation or modification of students' current methods, summarised in the table above, of 'taking in' what is being studied and retaining the basic ideas. It is not possible for students to study with no methods; using the BREAKS technique can help students to break down a topic into more manageable segments, engage with each concept, and retain the content for use in exams and for enhancing their education. It is a relatively simple way of learning to master new information in that the procedure can be learnt within a short period of time and can be applied to all educational fields, including the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, music, technology, engineering, medicine, business and law, and is useful for learning throughout one's life. Each step in this method will now be described

in detail.

Procedure

B = Break down

R = Read

E = Easy

A = Achievable

K = Knowledge

S = Structure

Break down: Carefully deconstruct large topics into smaller pieces that can be read and absorb one at a time. When a large amount of work is set for a single sitting, it tends to be less motivating and too overwhelming, resulting in a loss of concentration and focus. First get an overview of the topic by looking at a lecture outline or an index in a book or even 'goggle the topic on-line. Breaking down the material into smaller segments will help to make the topic more manageable – seeing on a single page, for example, how many concepts are required to adequately understand a topic and how the various concepts within a topic fit together.

Readable: Ensure that you read at a rate that aids rather than hinders your understanding. Often you will discover that any topic can be highly interesting once you start reading it – not initially with an exam in mind but with a view to finding out more about the subject. Read the material carefully and more than once to achieve a sound comprehension. When you feel that you have

attained some familiarity with the material, you can then turn your attention to reading effectively. Reading effectively refers to the amount of material covered and the time taken to cover it. Monitoring the number of sub-topics you are covering with in a larger topic (as per the index in step one above), as well as the time you take to cover it, will help to provide you with a sense of achievement and maximise the chance of obtaining a good result.

Easy: This concept involves arranging the topic of study in ways that are clear and legible, putting all your ideas in writing – whether on A4 sheets of paper, in a notebook, on a poster, or on flashcards. This will help you to keep sight of your studies in the midst of your daily activities. It also involves finding familiar examples relating to each concept in order to remember them more easily. These can be noted or drawn on the page in different colours, beneath a heading of the concept, thereby making the material more accessible. Set easy targets initially in order to accomplish your work according to your devised time schedule, discussed next, as this will foster a sense of progress and achievement.

Achievable: A study schedule should be drawn up showing the topics that need to be covered and when you plan to cover each one. These topics can be obtained from a lecture or syllabus outline or from an index in a textbook. Specify clearly what you want to get out of your studies, such as the grades you aspire to achieve, the theoretical or practical problems you want to be able to understand, analyse and discuss with others, or the professional or practical qualification you would like to attain. Then plan the realisable action

steps that you need to take to achieve the aims and objectives of studying. Set deadlines to keep you on track and be sure to set a realistic schedule to meet them. For example, setting yourself the goal of studying 4 broad topics per day is unrealistic; it is preferable to develop a programme that will keep you working consistently towards your set goals at a steady pace.

Knowledge: Aim to enhance your knowledge of your own particular style of learning.

For those with a more visual style of learning, forming a structural drawing of the material would be most beneficial. For those who tend to take in information by auditory means or by experiencing stimuli, the most beneficial techniques would entail integrating the key words of a topic into a song, or making memorable associations with 'emotionally-laden' words which the learner can easily remember. However, it could be helpful for all students to process the material by noting down vocabulary, historical dates, formulae or any subject matter that can be converted into a lexical or numerical format. You can draw any diagram of your choice to illustrate points outlining your own understanding, incorporating various formats such as graphs, tables, charts and labels. Thus, regardless of your learning style, a technique of note-taking, using keywords and other visual markings to organise the materials would be beneficial. Ensure that you find out any abbreviations before, during, and after lectures as these can facilitate the note-taking process. The more familiar you become with the keywords and main components of a topic, the more easily you will understand the topic

Structure: Write out the basic points of your study material in a structured format. This can be in the form of a graph, map, table, bubbles, rings, bands, spider diagram, or any visual marking that will help you make sense of what you have read on the topic. This process of documenting the vital points as you read will aid recall of what is studied as well as assist you in remaining focused and avoiding distractions. Moreover, organising the material in a visual format will foster engagement with the subject matter.

Example of BREAKS

Topic to be studied: Photosynthesis

This is a process that plants use in making their food by converting chemical carbon dioxide into organic compounds, especially sugars, using the energy from sunlight. Photosynthesis uses carbon dioxide and water, releasing oxygen as a waste product.

Listing Key Words: P P S F

P = Photosynthesis

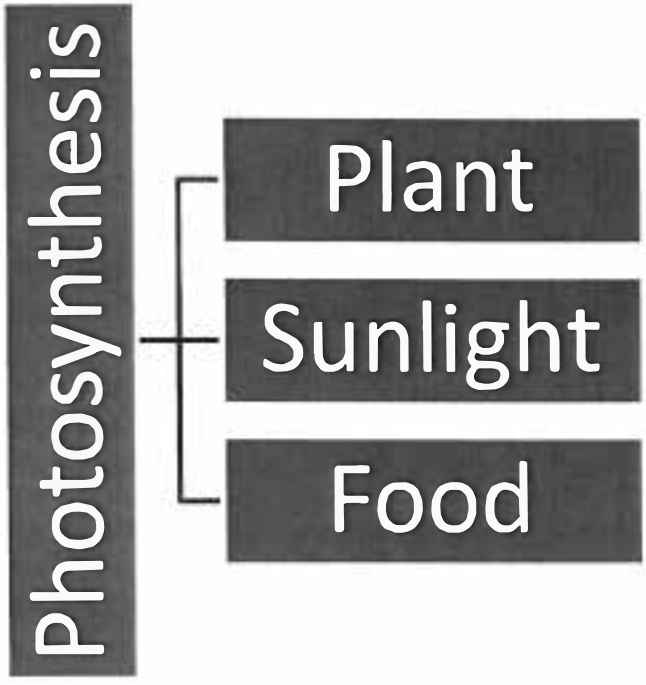
P = Plant

S = Sunlight

F = Food

Making these key words into a song could be especially beneficial for auditory learners.

STRUCTURE



This simple diagram illustrates the process by which a plant makes its food through the conversion of energy from sunlight. For visual learners, it could be further enhanced by illustrating each word with a drawing and arrows to indicate the movement of energy,

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of

(*Master of Philosophy* at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Name of candidate: Signature

Date: