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APPROACHES TO LEARNING AS PREDICTOR OF STUDENTS PERFORMANCE IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

Approaches to learning is a leading factor influencing students' academic performance, students who adopt deep approach perform better academically than those who adopt surface approach. The study adopted correlational research design to determines the relationship between variables. Population consists of all ND I students offering use of English. Sample of 121 students participated in the study. Instrument for data collection were Revised Two Factor Study Process Questionnaire and Performance Test in English. Validity of the instruments were ascertained by experts in educational psychology and English education. Cronbach's alpha reliability of .78 was obtained for Revised Two Factor Study Process Questionnaire and Split half reliability of .56 was obtained for Performance Test in English. Findings revealed a positive correlation $r = .73$ *between deep approach and performance in English while a negative correlation* $r = -.89$ *was found between surface approach and performance in English. F-value 224.678 at* $p\ 0.00 < 0.05$ *indicating approaches to learning significantly influences students' performance in English. Beta* $B = .016; t = 14.920$ $P\ .000 < .05$ *indicates deep approach significantly predicts students' performance in English. Based on the finding study recommends encouraging students to adopt deep approach considering it positive influence on students' performance in English.*

Keywords: Approaches to Learning, Students and Performance

Poor performance of students in English as been a major concern to educators and researchers alike considering role of English language in attaining academic success in all field of human endeavours. Studies such as Jegede (2009); Ngussa and Mbuti (2017); Maciejewski and Merchant (2016) have linked attitude, instructional methods and approaches to learning as factors contributing significantly to students' academic performance. However, among these factors approaches to learning has gained prominence in the literatures as the most influencer of academic performance.

Entwistle *et al*, (2001) defined approaches to learning as the expanding line describing processes students follow in learning. Marthon and Saljo (1976) stated that students adopt the deep and surface approaches when learning course materials. Loyens, *et al*. (2013) described the deep approach as intrinsic motivation to learning and highlight characteristics associated with deep approach to include self-

assessment, self-questioning and error detection.

Surface approach is the intention of students accomplishing academic tasks with less efforts (Biggs, 1993). Zakariya *et al.* (2020) describe the surface approach as students' reflection to external motive such as learning to obtained pass mark in examination. Surface and deep approaches influence academic performance in opposite way specifically surface approach pre-occupied by memorization leads to poor students' performance while deep approach involves in depth learning for better academic performance (Yaraten & Kasapoglu, 2012).

Objectives of the Study

The study investigates approaches to learning as predictor on students' performance in English and specifically aimed at determine the: -

i). relationship between deep approach and students' performance in English

ii). relationship between surface approach and students' performance in English

iii). extent approaches to learning predicts students' performance in English

Research Questions

i). what is the relationship between deep approach and students' performance in English?

ii). what is the relationship between surface approach and students' performance in English?

iii). what extent do approaches to learning predicts students' performance in English?

Hypotheses

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between deep approach and students' performance in English.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between surface approach and students' performance in English

H_{03}: Approaches to learning do not significantly predicts students' performance in English

Literature Review

Behaviourist theorist described learning as a mechanism through which external factors leads to response and over time become learnt behaviour (Duchesne, *et'al*., 2014). Behaviourism theory originated from works of Pavlov, Thorndike, Watson and Skinner. Pavlov contributed to behaviourism theory through his work on classical conditioning which is an exemplification of several educational theories. Classical conditioning suggests maintaining positive environment or possibility of students developing negative behaviour towards a subject due to unpleasant feelings associated with how it was learned. Thorndike's work was on application of exact science to educational problems based on his three laws of stimulus-response, firstly law of effect which stated that connection between stimulus and response is strengthened when is positively rewarded and weakened when is negatively rewarded, secondly law of exercise which stated the more stimulus response (S-R) bond is practiced the stronger it becomes and thirdly law which holds that due to structure of the nervous system some given situation are more predisposed.

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Constructivism theory is based on the scientific study of knowledge construction, understanding the world and interaction with environment (Dennick, 2016). Constructivism theory has it historical roots in the works of educational psychologist such as Bruner (1961); Piaget (1980); Vygotsky (1962). Bruner expanded his theory to include social and cultural aspect of learning, students learn and develop knowledge individually in a social learning environment based on information presented to them (Alanazi, 2016). Cognitive constructivism is linked to Piaget who states that students cannot be given information which they immediately understand instead must construct knowledge and understanding of it (Piaget, 1980). Piaget was first to take children thinking seriously by laying a concrete foundation on learning theories that classified cognitive development into four stages as sensorimotor stage which a child goes through from age zero to two years, preoperational stage from two to seven years old, concrete operational stage from eleven years old to adulthood.

Approaches to Learning and Academic Performance

Variation in students learning was recognised in 70's by Marton and Saljo who gave students an article to read and were asked to describe how they approach the reading task on basis of their responses two ways information can be processed were introduced as surface and deep approaches. Students who adopt surface approach have low understanding of concepts taught (Stathopoulous & Vosniadou, 2007). Haggis (2003) highlights the characteristics associated with surface approach to include memorization, underlying argument not comprehended and recitation of text materials. Deep approach is characterized by deep understanding of information by relating ideas for critical thinking skills (Mclnerney *et al*., 2012).

Studies such as Baris (2016) found a positive relationship between deep approach and students' performance while negative relationship was found between surface approach and students' performance. Puteh, *et al.* (2018) in their study found a relationship between students learning approaches and academic performance. Husseini, *et al*. (2018) in their study on relationship between approaches to learning and academic performance found a significant relationship between approaches to learning and students' academic performance.

Methods

The study adopted correlational research design to determines the relationship between variables. Population consisted all ND I students offering use of English at Hussaini Adamu Federal Polytechnic Kazaure. Sample of 121 students participated in the study. Instrument for data collection were Revised Two Factor Study Process Questionnaire and performance test in English. Validity of the instruments were ascertained by experts in educational psychology and English education. Cronbach's alpha reliability of .78 was obtained for the Revised Two Factor Study Process Questionnaire and Split half reliability of .56 was obtained for the performance test in English. Data were

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analysed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression at 0.05 level of significant.

Results

Table 1: Correlation Matrix on Deep Approach, Surface Approach and Performance in English

		Deep Approach	Surface Approach	Performance in English
Deep Approach	Pearson Correlation	1	-.704**	.734**
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.000
Surface Approach			1	-.897**
				.000
	N	121		

**.Significant at 0.05 level.

Table 1 shows a positive correlation $r = .73$ between deep approach and academic performance in English while a negative correlation $r = -.89$ was found between surface approach and performance in English.

Table 2: Multiple Regression on Approaches to Learning and Performance in English

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F Change	df1	Sig.
.738[a]	.768	.895	.64746	224.678	2	.000

**significant at 0.05 level

Table 2 gives adjusted R square as $.895$ meaning approaches to learning contributes 89.5 percent variance on students' performance in English. F-value 224.678 at p $0.00 < 0.05$ indicates approaches to learning significantly influences students' performance in English.

Table 3: Beta Coefficients on Approaches to Learning and Performance in English

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.162	.336		.481	.631
	Deep Approach	.069	.005	.863	14.920	.000
	Surface Approach	.003	.009	.019	.334	.739

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

Table 3 shows beta ($B = .016; t = 14.920$ P $.000 < .05$) indicates deep approach predicts students' academic performance while beta ($B = .06; t = 0.334$ P $.073 > .05$) indicates surface approach does not predict academic performance.

Discussion

The study found a positive relationship between deep approach and students' performance in English while a negative relationship was found between surface approach and students' performance in English this finding was consistent with Baris (2016) who found positive relationship between deep approach and academic performance and negative relationship between surface approach and academic performance. Kamath *et al.* (2018) in supports of present study found a positive relationship between deep approach and academic performance and a negative relationship between surface approach and academic performance.

Significant relationship was found between approaches to learning and students' performance in English this result agreed with that of Hussaini *et al.* (2018) who in their study found a relationship between approaches to learning and undergraduate medical students' academic performance. Also, in support of the represent finding was Puteh *et al.* (2018) who reported significant relationship between approaches to learning and academic performance.

Deep approach predicts students' academic performance this finding corresponds with Landan *et al.* (2014) found deep approach as predictor of undergraduate students' academic performance. Salamonson *et al.* (2013) reported deep approach as predictor of academic performance. Negash *et al.* (2022) found deep approach as predictor of students' academic performance.

Conclusion

The study revealed approaches to learning significantly influence students' academic performance in English. Students who adopt deep approach perform better in English than those who adopt the surface approach more over the deep approach was found to be predictor of students' performance in English.

Recommendation

The study recommends encouraging students to adopt the deep approach considering it positive role on performance in English however discourage adoption of surface approach due to it negative impacts on performance in English.

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