

**ADOPTION OF SELF-MONITORING-LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR SKILL ACQUISITION AMONG FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING STUDENTS IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH-EAST NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study determined the perception of accounting students on the adoption of self-monitoring learning strategies for enhanced academic performance in South East Nigeria. The design of the study was descriptive survey research design. 520 (178 males and 342 female) 2017/2018 final year accounting students constituted the population of the study. A sample size of 226 (77 males and 149 female) was drawn for the study using Taro Yamane formula. One research question guided the study and one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. An 11-item validated questionnaire was used for data collection. Cronbach alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the instrument. Mean score was used to answer the research question while the t-test statistic was used to test the null hypothesis. The analysis was carried out using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Findings revealed that students agree they adopt four out of the 11 listed self-monitoring strategies for enhancing their academic performance in financial accounting. Gender did not significantly influence respondents' mean ratings of the self-monitoring strategies they adopt for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting. Based on the findings, the researcher recommended among others that accounting educators should teach and impart on their students the skills required for self-monitoring learning, also encourage them to adopt the self-monitoring learning strategies for enhanced learning and better academic performance in financial accounting.

**Key Words:** Self-monitoring Strategy, adoption, financial accounting and Skill acquisition.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Education is regarded as a veritable tool for manpower development, economic growth and technological enhancement of any nation. In Nigeria, education is regarded as an instrument par excellence for achieving national development (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013). One of the national objectives of education is the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and Nigerian (FRN, 2013). The Nigerian educational system is divided into primary, secondary and tertiary education levels. Tertiary education level includes colleges of education, polytechnics and university.

College of education, according to the Nigerian Academy of Management Administration (2014), is an educational programme created to prepare individuals to be leaders and practitioners in education and related human service fields. This is by expanding and deepening

understanding of education as a fundamental human endeavour in helping society define and respond to its educational responsibilities and challenges. College of education prepares the individual for a career in teaching, employment in industries, civil service and business establishment as well as self-employment (Abanyam, 2014). Programmes instituted in colleges of education include business education that offers courses in accounting among others.

Accounting is the process of identifying, measuring and communicating economic information to stakeholders for objective decision making (American Accounting Association (AAA), 2010). The main aim of teaching accounting in colleges of education is to prepare students who will graduate in accounting and be in position to carry out the duties and responsibilities of accountants in government and private establishments. Accounting courses such as BED 111 - Principles of Accounting, BED 211 - Financial Accounting, BEA 311 - Advanced Financial Accounting and BEA 321 - Cost Accounting are offered. These accounting courses in addition to others offered helps students to acquire evaluative and quantitative skills, analytical, leadership and human relations skills needed for proper stewardship. These courses lead to the award of Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE) in accounting on completion of the programme (Nigerian Commission for Colleges of Education NCCE Minimum Standards, 2012). Skills acquisition in accounting encompass the abilities, capabilities, aptitude and expertise, acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained training, and necessary to adaptively perform accounting job functions effectively (Okoli & Ibeh, 2017). It is therefore expected that the products of NCE business education programme, especially those who majored in accounting will perform competently as accounting teachers and as accounting officers when employed.

Financial accounting is one of the accounting courses taught in business education programme. Financial accounting is defined by Annand (2015) as the field of [study](#) concerned with the summary, analysis and reporting of financial transactions to external users for decision making purposes. Topics covered in financial accounting courses from NCE I to NCE III classes include: evolution of bookkeeping, importance of bookkeeping, distinction between bookkeeping and accounts, subsidiary books and methods of keeping them, the ledger and its classifications, records in the ledger/principles of double entry, balancing of accounts and extraction of trial balance. Others are, the cash book that comprises simple, double and three column entries petty cash book and preparation of elementary final account as trading, profit and loss accounts, balance sheet and year- end adjustments. To meet the objectives of teaching financial accounting at any level of education, Oparaji and Nwaukwa (2019) noted that students need to understand the course, perform well academically and acquire the needed skills for effective job performances. However, financial accounting in tertiary institutions especially at colleges of education has been plagued by high failure rates, graduates' unemployment and poor performances even when employed.

Igbinedion and Enijuni (2014) noted that NCE business education students in Nigeria perform poorly in financial accounting courses. In support of this fact, Agboh (2015) reported that many of the NCE students in the seven South East Colleges of Education perform poorly in financial accounting. Eze (2014) observed that the NCE business education students'

performance in financial accounting is poor when compared with their performance in other business education courses especially within the first and second years of the three year Nigerian Certificate in Education programme. Eze also noted that between 20 and 30 percent of the students in each first year and second year financial accounting course failed financial accounting in colleges of education in South East, Nigeria.

This poor performance of students in financial accounting is very worrisome as it affects the quality of NCE business education graduates in Nigeria, worsens their employability status and increase the current unemployment rate among youths. This poor academic performance equally leads to poor skill acquisition among graduates in financial accounting. This could be attributed to some factors in teaching and learning process with poor learning strategy topping most. De Zoysa, Chandrakumara and Rudkin emphasized that the learning strategies adopted by most accounting students in learning accounting courses are the cause of high failure rates in the course as they do not allow students to meet their diverse learning needs. The need for a new learning strategies to reduce stress for both the teachers and students therefore becomes imperative especially in financial accounting. Oparaji and Nwaukwa (2019) posited that adoption of innovative learning strategies such as self-monitoring learning strategy could effectively assist financial accounting students in improving academic performance and skill acquisition for employability.

Self-monitoring strategies is a type of self-regulated learning strategies. Self-regulated learning strategies refer to individuals' self-generated thoughts, and actions that are systematically designed to affect learning of knowledge and skills (Zimmerman, 2008). The learning strategy is closely aligned with the constructivist perspective where learners are active in their learning and construct meaning internally rather than passively receive knowledge from external source. Self-regulated learning is critical for success in teaching and learning in academic and skill acquisition. Self-monitoring is a process of having individual record data regarding ones behaviour for the purpose of changing its rate (Coleman & Webber, 2013). It allows individuals to measure their behavioural outcome against a set standard. In order for learners to self-monitor their progress, they must set their own learning goals, plan ahead, independently motivate themselves to meet their goals, focus their attention on the task at hand, and use learning strategies to facilitate their understanding of material (Zimmerman, 2008). Effective students monitor their academic progress to obtain regular feedback on their performance. Coleman and Webber (2013) stated that self-monitoring allows individuals to measure their behavioural outcome against a set standard. Schempp, Webster, McCullick, Bush and Mason (2007) revealed that self-monitoring strategy is used to evaluate performance to identify and improve weaknesses. A broad range of studies have examined the use of self-monitoring in student development in various academic institutions. Research indicates that both students and teachers benefit from self-monitoring (Allinder, Bolling, Oats, & Gagnon, 2000). Self-monitoring has been associated with superior performances of students hence the importance of students adopting self-monitoring as a self-regulated learning strategies.

The adoption of self-monitoring strategies by students for enhanced academic performance could be influenced by gender (Remali, Ghazali, Kamaruddin, & Kee, 2013). Ozan, Gundogdu, Bay & Celkan, 2012 reported that gender effect can be a factor in determining the adoption of self-regulated learning strategies. It could be possible that male students adopt self-

regulated learning strategies more than their female counterparts in the learning process or vice versa. Although studies in the international context show that self-monitoring strategy have been effective in improving students' academic achievement in most subjects including accounting (Wiginton, 2013), there is limited research on its adoption by colleges of education students for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting in South East Nigeria. This study therefore ascertained students' adoption of self-regulated learning strategies for enhancing their academic performance in financial accounting in colleges of education in South East Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the perception of students on their adoption of self-monitoring self-regulated learning strategies for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting in colleges of education in South East Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined the perception of students on their adoption of:

Self-monitoring learning strategies for skill acquisition in financial accounting in colleges of education in South-East, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

What are the self-monitoring learning strategies adopted by students for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting in colleges of education in South East Nigeria?

### **Hypothesis**

One null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students on the self-monitoring learning strategies they adopt in enhanced academic performance in financial accounting.

### **Review of Related Literatures**

Self-monitoring is a concept introduced during the 1970s by Mark Snyder that shows how much people monitor their self-presentations, expressive behaviour, and non-verbal effective displays. Self-monitoring refers to a process of having individual record data regarding their own behaviour for the purpose of changing its rate (Coleman & Webber, 2013). It allows individuals to measure their behavioural outcome against a set standard. In addition, it is the process of observing ones behaviour and evaluating it in relation to set goals.

Self-monitoring strategy focuses on the way people monitor their presentations of self on a construct referring to individual differences to manage their behaviours and emotions (Schempp, 2007). Schempp found that skilled students believed they had to learn more while less skilled students believed they knew everything they needed to learning. This effort to identify and improve strengths and weaknesses is a form of self-monitoring. A broad range of studies have examined the use of self-monitoring in student development in various academic institutions. Research indicates that students both benefit from self-monitoring (Allinder,

Bolling, Oats, & Gagnon, 2000). Self-monitoring has been associated with superior performances of students and relevant literature has also discussed the importance of implementing self-monitoring in students (Schempp, McCullick, Bush, Webster & Mason ,2006;Roslan, Norlaila&Faizah, 2016).

Results of the study by Belford and Browder in Allinder et al. (2000) indicated that adoption of self-monitoring strategy increase students' outcome. The results further indicated that self-monitoring strategy increases the accuracy of decisions made by the students, and improved progress for students. The authors concluded that there was a functional relationship between the adoption of self-monitoring strategy and improved students' performance. Similarly, to become strategic learners, students must assume ownership for their learning and achievement outcomes (Kistner, Rakoczy& Otto, 2010). Teachers can encourage self-monitoring by having students keep a record of the number of times they worked on particular learning tasks, the strategies they used, and the amount of time they spent working. This practice allows students to visualize their progress and make changes as needed.

Joseph and Eveleigh (2011) stated that self-monitoring is a low-intensity, secondary prevention strategy designed to improve students' self-management skills and to support their academic, behavioural, and social development. It involves teaching students how to independently observe and record whether they are engaging in appropriate behaviour at a particular time. This flexible strategy according to Mooney, Ryan, Uhing, Reid and Epstein (2005) can be used to increase the occurrence of desired behaviours or to decrease inappropriate behaviours. Self-monitoring can be used in virtually any instructional setting as in general education classrooms, cafeterias, and vocational programs to address a variety of student needs in improving motivation and to promote greater independence. For example, self-monitoring strategies can be used to help students maintain attention, complete an assignment, remain on the task, solve problems, or track their own progress toward a goal. This strategy also can be used by a particular student across multiple settings to help him or her develop self-determination skills and greater autonomy. Sheffield and Waller (2010) pointed out that many students will be successful academically, behaviourally, and socially if given the usual instruction and same time supported to practice self-monitoring to promote greater independence in their learning. A smaller proportion of students may require even more individualized and intensive tertiary supports.

As a flexible strategy, self-monitoring can be tailored to address the academic, behavioural, and social deficits of students at the elementary, middle, or high school level. Lane, Menzies, Bruhn and Crnabori (2011) noted that self-monitoring plans can be simple to create and usually require no additional financial cost. Students must be able to recognize the occurrence and need for the desired behavior or skill for the intervention to work most effectively. Therefore, it may be necessary to first teach students to recognize and accurately perform the target behaviour. Self-monitoring strategies can positively affect behaviour, productivity and accuracy which may lead to improved academic performance and skill acquisition. This intervention strategy may also result in students gaining the skills and confidence to navigate learning responsibilities more independently and to transfer responsibility for this learning from the teacher to the student.



Unfortunately, Pedrosa, Cravino, Morgado and Barreira (2017) revealed that students are not self-monitoring their learning progress so as to enhance their academic performance and skill acquisition. Rada (2017) reported that self-monitoring strategy is one of the least self-regulated learning strategies adopted by students in enhancing academic performance. Additionally, Lear, Li and Prentice (2016) revealed that students do not have enough ability to direct their own learning independently using self-regulated learning strategies. However, Zimmerman and Schunk (2011) reported that all students are self-regulated learners to some degree, but not all students are utilizing self-monitoring strategies to the same degree. Zimmerman (2008) highlighted that students were often not taught to use effective self-regulated learning strategies for learning or encouraged to reflect or self-monitor their work. Zimmerman pointed out that only few students rely on feedback and fail to set goals and monitor their own learning which contribute to their failure in courses offered. The situation with financial accounting students in colleges of education in South East Nigeria is yet unknown, hence this study.

## 2. METHOD

This study was a descriptive survey research design. The study was carried out in South East, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 520 accounting students in the seven public colleges of education offering accounting education in south East Nigeria. The seven public colleges of education are Federal College of Education Eha-Amufu, AlvanIkoku College of Education, Federal College of Education Tech. Umunze, Federal College of Education Tech. Asaba, Enugu State College of Education Tech. Enugu, Imo state College of Education IHITEUBOMA, NwaforOrizu College of Education, Nsugbe.

A sample size of 226 (77 males and 148 female) 2017/2018 final year accounting students was used for the study. The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula using proportionate random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Self-Regulated Learning Strategies for Enhancing Academic Performance (QSLSEAP)". The instrument is structured on a four-point rating scale of: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagreed (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagreed (SD) = 1.

The face validity of the instrument was established using three experts in the field of business education and measurement and evaluation in NnamdiAzikiwe University Awka. The internal consistency (reliability) of the instrument was ascertained through trial test and data collected were analyzed with Cronbach Alpha which yielded coefficient values of 0.92 was obtained which was adjudged reliable. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive mean and t-test. A null hypothesis was rejected where the calculated P-value associated with the t-cal is less than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance. Whereas the null hypothesis was not rejected where the calculated P-value associated with the t-cal is greater than the stipulated 0.05 level of significance.

## 3. RESULTS

### Research Question

What are the self-monitoring learning strategies adopted by students for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting in colleges of education in South East Nigeria?

**Table 1 .Mean ratings and standard deviation on adoption of self-monitoring learning strategies for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting (N = 220)**

S/N	Self-Monitoring Learning Strategy	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1.	I make sure that my learning progress is in relation to each financial accounting learning activity	2.33	.70	Disagree
2.	I assuming responsibility for learning to enhance my performance in financial accounting	1.98	.85	Disagree
3.	I make necessary changes during the semester to ensure that I do well in my financial accounting courses	2.40	.49	Disagree
4.	I identify learning problems so as to solve them	2.71	.58	Agree
5.	I reflect on my academic performances in financial accounting to make needed adjustment	2.83	.57	Agree
6.	I check my academic behaviours so as not to deviate from the goals I have set for myself in financial accounting	2.18	.83	Disagree
7.	I keep record of a number of hours spent on solving financial accounting tasks	2.34	.84	Disagree
8.	I reflect on what was learned from financial accounting courses	2.50	.63	Agree
9.	I check my academic progress to achieve set goals	2.38	.69	Disagree
10.	I clearly define appropriate learning behavior	2.42	.64	Disagree
11.	I check my financial accounting assignments to ensure it was done well before submission	2.70	.77	Agree

Table 1 reveals that the respondents agree on four items (19, 20, 23 and 26) out of the 11 items listed as the self-monitoring learning strategy they adopt for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting. Their mean for the four items ranged from 2.50 to 2.83. The respondents however disagree with the remaining seven items (16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 24 and 35) as part of the self-monitoring learning strategies they adopt for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting. Their mean ratings ranged from 1.90 and 2.42. The standard deviations for all the items are within .49 to .84. This shows that there is homogeneity among responses.

**Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students in colleges of education in South East Nigeria on their adoption of the self-monitoring learning strategies for enhancing their academic performance in financial accounting.

**Table 2 .Summary of t-test analysis of mean ratings of respondents on their adoption of self-monitoring learning strategies for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting based on gender**

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	df	t-cal	p-value	Decision
Male	75	28.19	2.73				
		218	1.81	.09			Not Significant
Female	145	28.95	2.89				

Table 2 shows the mean ratings of male students ( $\bar{X}$  = 28.19, SD = 2.73) and female students ( $\bar{X}$  = 28.95, SD = 2.89),  $t(218) = 1.81$ ,  $P = .09$ . This means that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female students in colleges of education in South East Nigeria on their adoption of self-monitoring learning strategies for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings of the study disclosed that students in colleges of education in South East Nigeria agree they adopt the following self-monitoring learning strategies for enhancing their academic performance. They include: identifying learning problems so as to solve them, reflecting on my academic performances in financial accounting to make needed adjustment, reflecting on what was learned from financial accounting courses and checking their financial accounting assignments to ensure it was done well before submission. They however disagreed that they make sure that their learning progress is in relation to each financial accounting learning activity, assume responsibility for learning to enhance performance in financial accounting, make necessary changes during the semester to ensure that they do well in financial accounting courses, check their academic behaviours so as not to deviate from the goals they have set in financial accounting, keep record of a number of hours spent on solving financial accounting tasks, check their academic progress to achieve set goals and clearly define appropriate learning behaviour.

The finding of this study agreed with that of Pedrosa, Cravino, Morgado and Barreira (2017) who revealed that students are not self-monitoring their learning progress so as to enhance their academic performance and Rada (2017) who reported that self-monitoring strategy is one of the least self-regulated learning strategies adopted by students in enhancing academic performance. In agreement, Lear, Li and Prentice (2016) also revealed that students do not have enough ability to direct their own learning independently using self-regulated learning strategies. The findings also confirm Zimmerman and Schunk (2011) observation that all students are self-regulated learners to some degree, but not all students are utilizing self-monitoring strategies to the same degree.

The findings further revealed that gender did not significantly influence the respondents' mean ratings on adoption of self-monitoring learning strategy for enhancing their academic performance in financial accounting. This is at variance with the findings of Ozan, Gundogdu,



Bay & Celkan, 2012; Remali, Ghazali, Kamaruddin, & Kee, 2013 which reported gender effect on the adoption of self-regulated learning strategies among learners.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings one concludes that students in colleges of education in South east Nigeria do not adopt most of the self-monitoring learning strategies for enhanced academic performance in financial accounting. It could be that the students were not often taught to use effective self-regulated learning strategies or encouraged to self-monitor their work. This could also be a contributing factor to the poor performance discovered among the NCE financial accounting students in the southeast colleges of education in Nigeria.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers recommend that:

1. Administrators of Colleges of Education should organize workshops, seminars and conferences for accounting educators to enable them obtain and/or up- grade the teaching skills necessary to promote self-monitoring learning strategies among their students.
2. Accounting educators should teach and impart on their students the skills required for self-monitoring learning, also encourage them to adopt the self-monitoring learning strategies for enhanced learning, better academic performance and skill acquisition in financial accounting.
3. Federal and state governments should provide adequate fund to management of colleges of education for provision of an enabling teaching and learning environment that will promote self- monitoring learning strategies among the financial accounting students for better academic performance and skill acquisition.
4. Heads of Department of Accounting education in colleges of education should source fund beyond government allocations to provide the financial accounting students with facilities necessary for their adoption of self- monitoring learning strategies for improved academic performance and skill acquisition.

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