

A study of Perceptions and Practice of Various Study and Personal Habits and Association with Academic Performance in Higher Educational Institutions In and Around Nashik



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In a typical Indian middle class household, there are certain time tested standards of self-discipline and behaviour. Similarly some habits are considered as ideal study habits; habits that guarantee your best performance. Even though majority of today's student does not necessarily practice these habits for some reason, they have the same perceptions about ideal study habits. Some simple statistical tools help bring out the association between study habits and their performance and other effects on the students.

Keywords: Study Habits, Performance, Association

1. Introduction

In India, a lot of importance is given to education. Traditionally, in a middle class Indian family, many habits are considered to be essential in order to achieve all round personality development. These include sleep habits such as early to bed and early rise, eating simple food in moderate quantity, daily exercise, and daily prayer for peace and happiness for all. Practicing yoga/ meditation is also one such habit. Arne Eliasson, Christopher Lettieri, Arn Eliasson, (2010) found that compared to those with the lowest academic performance, students with the highest performance had significantly earlier bed times and wake times and also that napping tended to be more common among high performers.

Similarly, some study habits are traditionally considered as ideal study habits. Some of these are – studying regularly from the beginning, planning study time and following the plan, learning some more words daily to improve vocabulary, using memorizing technique for certain parts of the study, focusing on getting to 'understand' the subject concepts and seeking teacher's help by interacting with them.

As the times have changed, majority of today's student is not seen to practice these habits. Still they may have their own perceptions about ideal study habits. Ayodele, C.S and Adebisi, D.R (2013) found that self-concept and method of study were very strong determinant of study habit along with others. Researchers Jennjou Chen (2015) in their analysis about viewing pattern of online recorded lectures found that study habits in terms of online viewing patterns are significantly correlated with students' examination performance. They also found that, in the short run, last minute exam preparation does pay off. Tah Babila Mbah, (2010) found that students use of ICTs can positively impact their study habits.

Jesús De la Fuente, Maria Cardelle-Elawar ,(2009) found evidence to suggest that undergraduate student's academic performance was influenced by study habits that included planning aspect of study habits, health habits like regular exercise. Thomas H. Estes and Herbert C. Richards (1985) carried out a research about study habits and test performance of 9th and 10th grade students. They found that test performance is monotonically related to study behaviour where two of the parameters were understanding the subject and memorizing important points of the subject. Luisa Baquiran Aquino,(2011) noted favourable study habits as students utilizing their vacant hour so as to reduce evening work; taking few minutes to review answers before passing their examination paper; working hard to make a good grade even if they don't like the subject, studying three or more hours per day outside of class; organizing their work at the beginning of their study to utilize the time most effectively; giving special attention to neatness on reports, assignments and other work to be turned in. Her study shows that the high achievers have better study habits and attitudes as compared to low achievers. Anton Aluja and Angel Blanch, (2004) carried out a study analyzing relationships among personality factors, scholastic aptitudes, study habits and academic achievement. The findings in this study suggest that the better the study habits, the higher the academic achievement.

Sarath A. Nonis and Gail I. Hudson (2010) in their empirical research investigated the relationship of study time with college student performance. Their study revealed that study habits of access to notes and ability to concentrate demonstrated significant and positive relationships. Findlay Stephanie (2010) in her article discusses study done by researchers Philip Babcock and Mindy Marks which found that college students are studying less than they used to. One possible reason for decline in study time may be use of new technological tools.

In this paper 7 habits – study habits and other personal habits are considered. These are: get up and study early in the morning, study regularly from the beginning, plan time for study, Balanced daily routine with right diet, exercise, studying with efforts on understanding the subject concept, quality referencing by reading as much as possible on the topic, initiative to interact with teachers to solve queries. Research question was that are the study habits traditionally considered as "good habits" still relevant? Do the students today have the same perceptions or not? Whether their perceptions and actions go together?

The questionnaire designed collected information about whether students practiced these habits and their perception about which habits may positively affect their performance.

2. Methodology

The study was based on survey research design. Convenience sampling was used to collect data. Total 300 questionnaires were circulated to undergraduate and post graduate students from various colleges in Nashik out of which 237 were received.

Initially the questionnaire consisted of some more habits such as reciting formulas. A pilot study with a sample of 12 respondents was done. Cronbach's alpha was used to test, correct and test the research instrument for reliability. For the seven study habits and perceptions Cronbach's alpha was found to be 0.8211.

3. Data and Results

Table 1 Proportions of Study Habit Practice and Perceptions

Sr. No.	Habit	Practice	Perception
1	Get up and study early in the morning	0.553	0.71
2	Study Regularly from the beginning	0.46	0.60
3	Plan time for study	0.69	0.79
4	Balanced daily routine with right diet, exercise	0.52	0.70
5	Studying with efforts on understanding the subject concept.	0.80	0.80
6	Quality referencing by reading as much as possible on the topic	0.80	0.85
7	Initiative to interact with teachers to solve queries	0.80	0.835

It can be seen from the table that the proportion of actually practicing study habits is less the proportion of students having the perception that the particular study habit, if practiced will have a positive effect on their performance. It is interesting to note that proportion of practice of the habits that require a lot of self-discipline is much smaller compared to the proportion of other habits.

Table 2 Relationship between Study Habits and Academic Performance

Sr. No.	Habit	Q	X ²
1	Get up and study early in the morning	0.2278	2.4539
2	Study Regularly from the beginning	-0.0651	0.1939
3	Plan time for study	-0.0183	0.0132
4	Balanced daily routine with right diet, exercise	-0.2405	1.4920
5	Studying with efforts on understanding the subject concept.	-0.26	1.2634
6	Quality referencing by reading as much as possible on the topic	0.1989	1.3523
7	Initiative to interact with teachers to solve queries	0.062	2.6573

Simple coefficients of association for the study habits and performance were calculated and are represented in the table above. The second column shows values of chi square test statistic calculated for the same. Contrary to expectations, no association is observed between any of the habits and performance. The chi square tests reject any possibility of association between these study habits and academic performance.

Table 3 Relationship between Study Habits and Perceptions about Study Habits

Sr. No.	Habit and perception	Q	X ²
1	Get up and study early in the morning	0.7475	38.872
2	Study Regularly from the beginning	0.8439	59.0071
3	Plan time for study	0.8195	49.0650
4	Balanced daily routine with right diet, exercise	0.7465	38.0033
5	Studying with efforts on understanding the subject concept.	0.8744	184.3838
6	Quality referencing by reading as much as possible on the topic	0.8364	113.8774
7	Initiative to interact with teachers to solve queries	0.91823	177.0164

Simple coefficients of association for the study habits and perception about that study habits were calculated and are represented in the table above.

Also Total 202 students replied that getting help at the time of examination would be desirable. A large sample test for proportion reveals that $Z_0=0.06595$ which means that a null hypothesis of $P=0.9$ may be accepted. A very low correlation coefficient between performance and desire to get help was found to be as low as 0.027506. This reveals that being an achiever or non-achiever has nothing to do with desiring or not desiring of help at the time of examination.

Total 17.73 percent students reported that they had a low level of confidence at the time of examination. A very low correlation coefficient between performance and confidence level was found to be as low as 0.002481.

4. Limitations

1. Singular geographical location of the study may put restrictions on generalizing the results
2. A larger sample would be desirable.
3. Student data are self-reported and they may not have accurately reported their study habits.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

This exploration into perceptions and study habits suggests that the study habits or patterns have no association with performance. This is not consistent with what has been believed so far. This means that the “ideal” or “good” study habits considered here may not be relevant anymore.

This also suggests that there is a scope for more research that throws light on many questions such as are there some other factors which affect student's performance and renders the time tested techniques unnecessary? Is it new technology where information is available on your fingertips making studying a smarter and faster process? Today, from KG to PG the market is full of ready guides available for crash-course type studying. Today, there are techniques of facing every type of examination. Has the technique become more important than accommodation of body of knowledge?

From Table 3 it can be seen that there is a high positive value of coefficient of association between each study habit and perception about the study habit. Of all the coefficients, it is interesting to note that initiative to interact with teachers to solve queries has the highest value of association followed by studying with efforts on understanding the subject concept and studying regularly from the beginning. All chi square test statistic values are large enough to be rejected. The chi square tests all reject the hypothesis of independence between study habit practice and study habit perception. Therefore it can be said that student perceptions and actions about study habits go together. What the students believe, they also practice it and vice versa.

There is another fact revealed that speaks volumes about values or ethical standards of the students. Whether achiever or not, a majority of more than .85 wishes for help at the time of examination. Is this thinking what makes the time tested “ideal” study habits irrelevant for academic achievement? Does it mean that “instant” is more attractive than “permanent”?

6. References

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