

Investigating Study Habits Contributing To High Academic Level بحث في عادات الدراسة التي تساهم في رفع المستوى الأكاديمي

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Abstract

Study habits are an indispensable part of the learning process; they can affect students' academic achievement in a way that may enhance or hinder it. A habit is essentially a practice or an activity performed systematically without the need to think about it or find any difficulty in retaining it. Effective study habits require a good mindset and the determination to create or develop an existing one. The current work aimed to investigate the following study habits: note-taking, time management strategies, procrastination, and the exploration of educational sources, used by second-year students in the department of English at Batna 2 University.

The study revolved around the assumption that students who achieved a high CGPA (cumulative grade point average) were practicing effective study habits more efficiently compared to their peers with an average CGPA. To test and track this assumption, the researchers conducted a quantitative research design. A 4-point Likert scale questionnaire was designed and distributed to 132 students using a random sampling technique, along with a T-test to analyze and evaluate whether the two groups were significantly different from each other. The dataset revealed statistical differences between the studied groups.

Keywords: Study habits; Academic performance; first year students.

ملخص

تعد عادات الدراسة جزءاً مهماً من عملية التعلم حيث يمكنها أن تساهم بشكل فعلي أما في تعزيز التحصيل الأكاديمي أو إعاقته، تعتبر العادة أي ممارسة أو نشاط يتم تنفيذه بشكل تلقائي دون الحاجة إلى التفكير فيه أو إيجاد أي صعوبة في الحفاظ على نسق تنفيذه، يترتب تطبيق أو تطوير عادات دراسة فعالة تفكيراً حسناً وعزيمة ثابتة.

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تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى التحقيق في عادات الدراسة الآتية تدوين الملاحظات، استراتيجيات إدارة الوقت، المماثلة، والتفاعل مع المصادر الأكاديمية والتي يستخدمها طلاب السنة الثانية من قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بجامعة باتنة 2، تفترض هذه الدراسة أن الطلاب الذين حققوا معدل سنوي مرتفع هم من يمارسون العادات الدراسية الفعالة بشكل أكثر كفاءة من زملائهم الطلاب الذين حصلوا على معدل سنوي متوسط، للتحقق من هذه الفرضية استخدم الباحثون البحث الكمي لإجراء الدراسة، حيث تم تصميم استبيان بمقياس ليكرت على سلم أربع درجات وتوزيعه على 150 طالبًا باستعمال تقنية التوزيع العشوائي، كما قام الباحثون أيضًا باستعمال اختبار (ت) لتحليل وتقييم نتائج مجموعتي الطلاب متفوق ومتوسطي المعدل، خلصت نتيجة البحث إلى وجود فروق ذات دلالة احصائية تثبت تأثير عادات الدراسة الفعالة على الأداء الأكاديمي الجيد بين عینتي البحث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العادات الدراسية؛ الأداء الأكاديمي؛ طلبة السنة الأولى

Introduction:

The overture to academic success and effective studying is learning how to study smarter, not harder. This becomes more and more evident as we advance in our education. An hour or two of studying a day is usually sufficient to make it through high school with satisfactory grades, but when college arrives, there aren't enough hours in the day to get all the studying in if we don't know how to study smarter. While some students are able to breeze through school with minimal effort, which is the exception, the vast majority of successful students achieve their success by developing and applying effective study habits.

Significance of the study:

The significance of investigating study habits in our department of English is immense, and it has many benefits because academic success is an instrumental aspect of the academic lives of students and their surroundings. Therefore, identifying these proper study habits not only helps in loading students' knowledge but also assists them in achieving better grades and improving their chances of success in their chosen field. Moreover, it serves as a reminder to the teachers to spread and address the issue with their students and draws more of their attention to the usefulness of the effective study habits used by students who secured a high grade, which may help the students with average achievements to focus more on adjusting their own habits.

Theoretical perspective:

The investigation of study habits and their contribution to high academic achievement is a key topic that has been probed by several researchers. Some of the hypotheses implemented tried to articulate the linkage between these habits and academic success both theoretically and statistically; each study has its own approach, objective, and therefore variables. For instance, Pekrun, Elliot, and

Maier (2009) conducted a study on 327 undergraduate students from a German university. The respondents were asked to fill out a questionnaire about the strategies they used to study and the grades they achieved during their semester. The findings demonstrated a positive connection between the learning practices and academic achievement. In particular, the researchers noticed that students who achieved a higher grade than those with lower grades harnessed more self-regulated learning techniques, such as goal-setting, planning, scheduling, and evaluation. Students in courses requiring greater levels of cognitive processing showed especially significant relationships between self-regulated learning practices and academic success.

Therefore, the relationship between the practices students use to study and their academic performance was proven to be positive. Another study conducted by Bäckström, Björklund, and Johansson (2015). The purpose of this research was to determine whether or not there is a relationship between self-discipline, time management, and academic achievement among college students. In the research, there were a total of 414 undergraduate students participating from a Swedish university.

These students were asked to complete questionnaires that assessed their time management abilities, self-discipline, and academic achievement. According to the findings, good academic performance was highly connected with both better time management strategies and self-discipline. In particular, students who claimed to have better time management strategies and greater levels of self-discipline got higher marks overall and were more likely to finish their courses on time.

However, some researchers and academics argue that academic performance is the primary indicator of a quality learning experience in every school setting, particularly in higher institutions (Magulod, 2018), others have come to the conclusion that it is not the impact of one element or two but a combination of these many aspects that might explain students' academic performance (Proctor et al, 2006). Hence, the current study is trying to focus on the four habits that have been mentioned previously, which are: note-taking, time management strategies, procrastination, and access to educational sources. These are what interest the researchers to find out about.

Statement of the problem:

All students enrolled in the department of English language and literature have somehow similar opportunities to learn and gain what is necessary to enhance their knowledge about what concerns their field of study; they take similar courses from their teachers and have an equal chance to access the same platforms, services, and other educational materials; they are surrounded by the same conditions; and what goes on for one student goes on for all. However, some students seem to struggle to achieve a good grade, while others perform much better and successfully attain one.

The researchers make an observation of this phenomenon and tag it as a problem worth further investigation. Kothari (2004) stated that "There are two types of research problems, viz., those which relate to states of nature and those which relate to relationships between variables. At the very outset, the researcher must single out the problem he wants to study" (P12). The researchers raise a request to the department's administration to check the last-year CGPA of second-year students, the target population. The data showed that only 8% of students achieved a grade on a ranged scale between 14 and 16; the interpretation of this scale in no francophone countries is "A+, A-" and described as "Very Good-Highest Honors".

Objectives of the study:

This investigation is an attempt to exhibit and identify second-year students' behavioral routines of study, particularly in note-taking, time management strategies, procrastination, and the exploration of academic sources. It seeks to establish differences between students with high and average CGPAs and how each group performs these habits, hence comparing the results of the two groups and pursuing the findings in quest of any observable differences.

Research Design:

Rajasekar (2013) describes methodology as a methodical approach to solving a problem. It is the scientific study of how research should be conducted. Fundamentally, research methodology refers to the procedures that researchers adopt to describe, clarify, and predict phenomena. It is also referred to as the investigation of how new information is acquired. It seeks to provide a research work plan. Therefore, this chapter provides an overview of the research procedures employed during the investigation. It contains information about the participants, such as the research design for the study, who the participants were,

and the manner in which they were sampled. The researchers outline the research design that was adopted for the purposes of this study as well as the justifications behind it. The instrument used for data collection is also explained, as well as the procedures followed to carry out this investigation. The researchers also describe the data analysis methodologies employed. And finally, the validity and reliability of this study was checked.

Choice of Method:

A research method is commonly conceived as the process of collecting or producing data. Research methods are classified mainly as quantitative, for instance, conducting an investigation through surveys or questionnaires, and as qualitative like preparing interviews with the target individuals and creating focus groups. It could also be a combination of both these types in mixed-methods research. However, selecting a suitable method for the study is empirical owing to the fact that the researchers have to consider and correlate between the objectives of the study, the type of data intended to be collected, and the given time frame, all three together. Therefore, the current work attempted to observe and describe the patterns of the respondents through deductive reasoning. The researchers used a descriptive method to present these patterns and analyze the findings; in this case the quantitative approach is the most suitable to address the topic.

Research Questions and Hypotheses:

The intention built upon this study is to observe and explore study habits of two groups, knowing that the respondents had different CGPAs. The first question investigated the note-taking habits of students with HAP and AAP. The second question tried to find out whether or not students with this grade variance employ different time management strategies. The third question's motive was to fathom how both groups of students cope with procrastination. And last question is meant to know what educational sources each group favors. The researchers claimed that there are distinctive differences in study habits that may affect the academic performance of students. Thus, the answers collected from the research questions would provide a better understanding of this inquiry.

Population and Sampling Techniques:

The population sample is one of the necessary items in any research project because it defines the scope of the research and helps the researcher generalize the findings to a larger group. "It is a group of individuals that have been selected

from a larger population and is used to draw conclusions about the population as a whole. Samples are used when it is not practical or possible to study an entire population, and they must be selected in such a way as to minimize the chance of bias or error" (Johnson, 2013, p. 127).

The population target in the present study was second-year students (L2) from the Department of English; the total number of individuals is 386. The researchers applied Richard Geiger's formula to calculate the sample size.

$$n = \frac{\left(\frac{z}{d}\right)^2 \times (P)^2}{1 + \frac{1}{N} \left[\left(\frac{z}{d}\right)^2 \times (P)^2 - 1\right]}$$

With a 95% confidence level and a 7% margin of error, the correct sample size found was 131 students. Subsequently, the researchers adopted a cluster sampling technique because they presupposed it to be the best fit for the purpose of this study and because it granted more accessibility to the sample population. Kothari (2004) the clustering approach can, however, make the sampling procedure relatively easier and increase the efficiency of fieldwork. (P16)

The second-year students were already divided by the administration into nine existing groups; hence, nine pieces of paper were prepared, and on each one is a number representing one group. After that, they were pleated and placed inside a small box. The researchers shook the box and drew a number each time without returning the drawn number back. As a result, the sample groups that were supposed to represent the population were groups 3, 6, 8, and 9.

Data collection Procedures:

The systematic method of collecting, organizing, and analyzing data for a research inquiry is referred to as the data collection procedure. It requires choosing feasible data collection methods, developing data collection instruments, and putting the data collection process into action. There are two types of data to consider before outlining the study; Kothari (2004) stated that primary and secondary data differ from each other. The main data are those that are obtained for the very first time by the researcher himself or herself and hence have an origin nature. Secondary data, on the other hand, are those that have already been acquired by others and have gone through a statistical process.

The procedure of handling the data followed the suggestion of using the primary data method since the study opted for investigating variables that are not being ranged and studied the same way the researchers intended to measure them, thus a questionnaire made of 21 questions divided into 2 parts: the first part represented 3 basic questions about age, gender, and the CGPA, the second part represented questions about effective study habits.

160 copies of the questionnaire were made and distributed to the sample groups: 3, 6, 8, and 9. The questionnaire was delivered to the teachers of the target classes at the same time and informed them of the sampling method used in this study to prevent it from shifting to voluntary sampling. After 3 hours, the researchers took back the questionnaires and checked them one by one to calculate the valid number of responses and to ditch the uncompleted ones. The total number of questionnaires accepted was 132, which was more than sufficient to proceed with the data analysis.

Data Analytical Procedures:

The researchers classified the questionnaire data into two groups, primarily the first group representing all students with a high CGPA and the second group representing students with an average CGPA, then reentered the responses from the questionnaire into Google Forms to simplify the process of construing the data, therewith exporting it to Excel and decoding it in SPSS Version 24. Statistical techniques were used such percentages, mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, and a T-test for one total sample and another for two separate samples to calculate the differences.

As for the questionnaire, the researchers chose to use a 4-point scale Likert questionnaire for interpreting the effective study habits; high value equals 4 points and the low value equals 1 point; the selected options were often (4), sometimes (3), rarely (2), and never (1). However, there are 4 questions from the Likert scale that do not follow the same choice of options mentioned, but they have the same order of value mentioned before. All questions are adjusted to indicate a positive state. Moreover, three levels of measurements were used for the mean average of the responses and described in table 01.

Table 01: The three levels of measurements for the mean average of the respondents

High	Average	Low	Level
4 - 2.67	2.66 - 1.34	1.33 - 1	Mean Average

Findings:

The researchers' first hypothesis stated that there is an average level of adherence towards effective study habits among the respondents. In order to identify the level of interest in these habits, the average total score of the questionnaire respondents was calculated along with the standard deviation.

Table 02: *level of interest in study habits*

Average mean	Standard deviation	Observed t	Calculated t
2.62	0.43	1.97	3.226

The results fall under an average mean of 2.62 and a standard deviation of 0.43, which indicated an ordinary to above-average interest in effective study habits among the respondents. Now to ensure the differences are statistically significant and not due to chance, the researchers compared the findings of the mean with the t value. The differences were noticeable: the p-value is ≤ 0.05 and the calculated t (3.226) is greater than the observed t (1.97), thus it can be said that there is an ordinary level of adherence towards affective study habits among students. It indicates that the students are not largely interested in practicing effective study habits due to various reasons like for instance, the absence of motivation. Some learners may not see the importance of studying and may be unwilling to put up the necessary work to check their study habits or even to look forward to building good ones. On top of that, students in the university have typically a substantial workload and may feel stressed out, making it difficult to prioritize learning and develop effective study habits. However, it is worth mentioning that other reasons may take part in this as well. The researchers went further in their analysis to add more details to the findings.

The questions of effective study habits consisted mainly of 18 questions. To improve the clarity of the findings, the researchers labeled them in four dimensions; each dimension represents a habit in such a way: note taking, time

management, procrastination, and educational sources. Afterwards, analyzed the results of the answers at each level of the four dimensions using percentages, mean average, p-value, and other statistical measurements.

The second hypothesis states that there is statistically a substantial distinction between the respondents' study habits and their academic achievement. The researchers use the mean, standard deviations, and independent sample tests to confirm or deny the truthfulness of their hypothesis.

We also noticed the differences between the average scores of the four dimensions in the two sample groups.

Table 03 : *Dimension 1: note taking average scores*

	Mean score	Standard deviation
HCGPA	3.660	0.435
ACGPA	3.145	0.749

The first dimension is note-taking, the scale is shown to be in favor of students with a HCGPA, with a mean score (3.660) and the standard deviation (0.435), compared to the mean score (3.145) and a standard deviation (0.749) of students with ACGPA, these differences are observable and proven even further by the (t) test for two independent samples, as it showed that the $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ and the calculated t (3.348) is greater than the observed t (1.97) at the significance level of (0.05), this indicates that students with HCGPA take notes more effectively than those with ACGPA, and perhaps it is due to how important the practice itself for these students, noting taking is essential for the process of learning and there are a lot of studies provide evidence for its positive impact on students achievement. For instance, Kiewra et al stated that the practice of taking notes motivates students to interact with the material more profoundly and to make associations between various concepts, which can lead to enhanced comprehension and retention (2019). Another study by Rawson and Kintsch (2005) concludes that "note-taking can be a powerful tool for developing critical thinking skills, as it requires students to actively process and synthesize information."

Table 04 : Dimension 2 time management

	Mean score	Standard deviation
HCGPA	3.1041	0.4723
ACGPA	2.597	0.3662

The second dimension is time management, the scale is shown to be in favor of students with a HCGPA also , with the Mean score (3.1041) and the standard deviation (0.4723), compared to the mean score (2.597) and a standard deviation (0.3662) of students with ACGPA, these differences are observable and also proven even further by the (t) test for two independent samples, as it showed that $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ and the calculated t (5.882) is greater than the observed t (1.97) at the significance level of (0.05), this likewise indicates that students with HCGPA have more control over their time and know to how to organize it effectively, which would help and lead eventually to achieve a high achievement since a good time management strategies can improve academic performance and reduce stress levels among students, Lee and Yin (2018) stated that “Planning ahead and prioritizing tasks can also help students make the most of their time and ensure that they are able to complete assignments and study effectively.” - Barkley et al. (2016).

Table 05 : Dimension 3 procrastination

	Mean score	Standard deviation
HCGPA	2.953	0.74374
ACGPA	1.5888	0.78852

The third dimension is procrastination , the scale is shown to be in favor of students with a HCGPA , with the Mean score (2.953) and the standard deviation (0.74374), compared to the mean score (1.5888) and a standard deviation (0.78852) of students with ACGPA, these differences are observable and also proven even further by the (t) test for two independent samples, as it showed that $p\text{-value} \leq 0.05$ and the calculated t (7.874) is greater than the observed t (1.97) at the significance level of (0.05), therefore, in addition to the two previous dimensions of note-taking and time management, procrastination also indicates statistically a substantial distinction between these three study habits with regard to the students’ academic achievement, the results of the procrastination scale

indicates a strong will of students with HCGPA, they are maybe more active, more determent, more engaging, they value their time, and the time spent in general, that is impressive because defeating procrastination is a key element to success academically and socially, Steel (2007) stated that students who often indulge in procrastination, may resulting in negative effects on their academic performance and well-being.

Table 06 : Dimension 4 educational source

	Mean score	Standard deviation
HCGPA	2.800	0.304
ACGPA	2.677	0.304

The fourth dimension is educational source., The scale is shown to be slightly in favor of students with a HCGPA, with a mean score (2.800) and a standard deviation (0.304), compared to the mean score (2.677) and a standard deviation (0.304) of students with ACGPA. Though these differences do not seem to have significance or effect, that is what the t test for two independent samples is showing, as it shows that the $p\text{-value} \geq 0.05$ and the calculated t (1.305) is less than the observed t (1.97), then it can be deduced that statistically speaking, educational sources have no effect on students' achievement in this study. However, that does not mean that access to various academic sources have no benefits for the students, at the contrary "Students who engage with a diverse range of educational materials are more likely to develop critical thinking skills and gain a deeper understanding of complex concepts". Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007), for instance Hattie (2009) conducted research in which he concluded that student learning and academic success are significantly impacted by the expertise and feedback provided by teachers.

Another study conducted by He and Zhu (2015) concluded that students' comprehension of as well as achievement in academic subjects improved when they used online sources such as lecture videos, discussion forums, and interactive simulations. Martin and Nicolas (2011) discovered that student achievement increases when they have access to materials from libraries, including databases, books, and journals. With that being said, the scale indication means that students from both groups are not engaging in this habit dimension, they must be notified and reminded of the educational resources' value.

The researchers use another independent “sample Test” for all eighteen items mentioned in this study in Table 8 to show more data and present the specific ones that indicate a significant difference in favor of students with HCGPA compared to their peers with ACGPA, the items are 05, 06, 09, 11, 14, 15, 17, 18.

Through what was previously presented and by addressing the hypotheses of the study, the researchers were able to confirm the first and second hypotheses, as it was found that the sample participants had in fact an above-average level of attachment towards study habits. It means they somehow understand that a good study habit can alter and exert influence on their academic achievement during the learning process. Afterward, the researchers carried out their investigation and demonstrated existing variances between students with average CGPA and those with High CGPA in terms of the effective study habits they practiced. The finding statistically approved that the latter group of students were performing better in the following study habits: Note taking, time management strategies, and procrastination while the results of the last habit “educational sources” seemed to have no significant difference between the two groups.

Limitations of the Study:

As with any research, the present study's accomplishments are unavoidably limited and subject to potential flaws that would probably pave the way for further investigations.

Initially, the factor of study habits is not the only one that has an influence on academic achievement; that is beyond question; there are many other factors treated in other research papers and studies and even spooked about in detail in several books, wherefore the researchers had to point out that this factors may interfere with the reliability and validity of the study.

In addition to that, the researchers have no influence over the students' responses; some of them answered thoughtfully in a positive way, whereas others responded quickly, which may affect their choice and therefore compromise the validity of the results. In addition, some students refused to respond to the questionnaire, which reduced the sample size the researchers intended to target.

Moreover, some respondents did not answer critical questions, that compelled the researchers to decline their entire questionnaire, which also affected the sample size intended to be studied.

Conclusion

In each educational level in general and at a university level in particular, there are always those students who draw the attention through their remarkable academic eminence, they always have the upper hand securing high scores, this is intriguing because in almost all cases these students seem to act differently from the rest, the researchers looked up and questioned their habits of study, do they really defer from the rest of the students; in terms of taking notes and put into practice what they wrote, do they use their time more efficiently and perform better strategies, does nowadays biggest phenomenon “procrastination” have its way to them and somehow affect their learning experience as much as the other students, and what sources of knowledge they rely the most on to enhance their learning compered to their peers. All these points were raised during this study and surrounded by an in-depth literature through the relevant information that relied on previous studies done in this field. The latter proved these habits to be great practices that would contribute and lead to substantial academic achievement.

The study hypothesized first the existing habits of study among all students and then placed a second hypothesis, which proclaimed high academic performance students to have a better implementation of these effective study habits when compared to the rest of students. The data were collected using a quantitative approach; hence the researchers used a questionnaire as their data gathering tool to highlight the dissimilarities between the two groups.

The findings of the study endorse statistical differences in how each group reacts to each habit of study; for instance, students with high academic performance exhibited a high interest in revising notes after they took them, a high persistence to study, and a more resistance to procrastination.

It can be concluded that among the four study habits, only three can be considered to have a contribution to the academic achievement of students.

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Investigating Study Habits Contributing To High Academic Level

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