

Comparison of Study Habits of Formal and Non formal Students

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Abstract

Study habits of students is an important aspect in the success of students. Students have their own learning needs and learning demands according to the geography and the local environment. Study habits include structured planning whether it is for students belonging to formal or non-formal streams. This study shed light on the comparison of study habits of formal and non-formal students. This paper aimed and compared study habits of formal and non-formal students. Quantitative research methods were used for data collection using questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale. For this purpose, 430 students were selected (350 from NFE and 80 from formal education). An independent sample t-test was used for analysis after data collection. The results obtained showed that the study habits of the formal students were better than the non-formal students in the Swat district.

Keywords: *Study Habits, Formal Education, Non-Formal Education, Distance Learners*

Introduction

Students' learning depends upon their learning habits. Formal education and non-formal education setups focus on inculcation of concepts and an important aspect of their learning is students' study habits. According to Azikiwe (1998) "good study skills are good asset to learners because, these assist students to attain mastery in areas of specialization and consequent excellent performance, while the opposite constitute constraints to learning and achievement leading to failure". Habitual actions, which play an important role in shaping behavior, are highly relevant to students' learning routines throughout their educational essence of cultivating effective study habits. Students in formal education systems adhere to structured routines and face-to-face classes, differing significantly from students in informal systems who operate within a more flexible and independent framework that promotes student autonomy. Understanding and comparing study habits between these two types of education is crucial given their different approaches and student responsibilities. Little attention has been paid to the study of study habits of non-formal education students in Pakistan, while previous studies have examined the study behavior of university students within formal systems, revealing deficiencies in the study habits of female students. Non-formal education environments offer isolated and independent learning experiences combined with unique learning needs inextricably linked to the community context.

In the Swat community, known for prioritizing business and agriculture in its tax-free zone with abundant freshwater, education is often given relatively less attention. Both formal education (FE) and non-formal education (NFE) aim to promote student learning, although their approaches differ markedly. The purpose of this study is to comprehensively identify the learning habits cultivated in formal and non-formal education systems, and to provide insights that will help non-formal education institutions develop strategies to motivate students to learn. This combined version seeks to integrate the ideas presented in the original sections, providing a coherent and logically structured introduction that covers key elements of the research background, literature, and rationale for studying study habits in formal and non-formal education systems.

Pakistan being a developing country is facing many issues in the field of education especially when it comes with the students' academic needs, learning styles, students' study assistance etc. we have not attained the benchmark of international forums to meet the educational challenges. Our education system focuses equally on every child irrespective of his/her

study habits, individual needs, individual preferences, educational choices etc. Since two main systems of education are operating in Pakistan one of formal and other is non-formal. These issues are prevailing in both forms of education. How students are studying and what types of leaning habits, study habits etc. they possess are totally neglected. Since educational institutions reflect a society, so is the Case with our institutions (Mirza and Malik, 2000) and female students face more challenges than females in managing with the education they receive and their study habits. study skills.

Review of Literature

Study habits refer to the setting of any subject which needs to be learned by students and the stamina of learners or students to learn when the opportunity is provided to them. Students cannot acquire knowledge and learn something in a proper way without having study skills. A few research studies have been conducted regarding this topic in Pakistan. Asma (2002) explains the study habits of students from formal system. The study habits include structured planning, for example following the timetable and assignment deadlines, proper use of resources like books and online materials, class attendance, note taking and goals setting. The study habits of student's non-formal education systems are including self-directed learning and motivation, practical application of knowledge, usage of different available sources like books, online materials, WhatsApp groups and technology integration. Iqbal and Shezadi (2002) conducted research on "Study habits of female students at the university" and the results conclude that female students have lack good study habits as well effective study skills.

Study habits include a proper plan, management, motivation, note taking etc. An individual learns better than another just because of study habits. Investigation of habits of the students from formal and non-formal education system of Pakistan is conducted by Bajwa and Ramzan (2011). This study revealed that students of formal system are better in note taking, time management and exam preparations. Whereas the students of non-formal system are better in class participation activities and general study strategies, motivation. Putting results in a in a nutshell, we can say that the students from non-formal system are better than the students of formal system (Bajwa at al. 2011). Another study conducted in Mexico to compare study habits among university students of accounting and the results indicate that the study habit of proper planning and note taking is high in the first, second and thirist semester students than the students of 4th, fifth semester (Macedo, 2020).

The extent of the student's engagement in regular and appropriate routine of study in a conducive learning environment is represented by the study habits (Crede & Kuncel, 2008). There are good study habits as well as bad study habits. Successful students have good study habits. Good study habits increase the academic achievement of the students. (Amandeep & Raj, 2015). It is an index of the total study pattern affecting achievement directly or indirectly. These study habits can be measured by examinations, rating scales or inventories, etc.

A student's academic achievements are provided by the examination and are thought to be a criterion by which total potential and capabilities of students are judged. (Nuthana & Yenagi, 2009).

The familiarization of the students with the relation of academic achievements and good study habits is important for success in education. (De-Escobar, 2011). Study habits are the most important keys to better learning and better academic achievement in schools (Robinson, 2000). It is more important to being smart, practical and use better application of study habits than being intelligent and hardworking (Clark, 1996). There is very limited research conducted on this topic in Pakistan Asma (2001) and Iqbal and Shehzadi (2002, p.60) conducted study to collect information on study habits and found that study habits are significant contributor of academic success.

Non-formal education is a type of education in which organized and structured learning is carried out from outside a formal learning environment, formal school system. It is life-long education with a flexible system of education having no specific age or time limit for learning. It is therefore a continuous learning. Because of the flexible nature of non-formal education system, the non-formal students have more independence. This independence and freedom may affect the study habits of the students. i.e., lack of seriousness or lack in regularity or the schedule. The non-formal and formal students have different schedules and routines leading to a diversity of study habits.

Statement of the Problem

The study habits of a student lead him/her to educational success. There are two types of education systems formal and nonformal. Students belonging to any educational system have their own learning needs and study habits. Non-formal education students belong to different regions and are usually spread across different areas of a country, each with different socioeconomic conditions and educational requirements. Since students have different learning needs, resulting in different study habits in both formal and non-formal educational institutions. Assessing and

comparing the study habits of formal and non-formal education students is necessary for educational institutions to develop strategies that promote students' study habits. This understanding helps to address the unique learning needs that exist in both formal and non-formal education. So, this study was conducted on “comparison of study habits of formal and non-formal students”.

Objectives of the study

This study has the following objectives.

1. To compare the study habits of the post graduate formal & non formal students of Swat region in terms of time management.
2. To compare the reading study habits of the post graduate formal and non-formal students of Swat region in terms of time management.
3. To make a comparison between writing study habits of the post graduate formal and non-formal students of Swat region.

Hypotheses

- H0¹: There is no significant difference in the time management of study habits of formal and non-formal students.
- H0²: There is no significant difference in the reading study habits of formal and non-formal students.
- H0³: There is no significant difference in the writing study habits of formal and non-formal students.

Significance of the Study

Findings of the study will be helpful for formal and non-formal educational institutions to know the study habits of its students of post graduate level. It will also help the institution to develop strategies for engaging its students in studies to develop their study habits and quality in learning.

Research Methodology

This study used survey, and it was descriptive in nature.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The Quantitative Approach Survey method was employed for the subject study. The population of the study consisted of (1500) all the students enrolled in the M. Ed program of Allama Iqbal Open University from Swat Region and all the 80 students enrolled in Govt. Degree college Swat. A cluster sampling technique was used to conduct the research study. Sample size of 50 students from each cluster was randomly selected. Seven

Clusters i.e. study center from seven tehsils of District Swat i.e., Babu Zai, Barikot, Bahrain, Charbagh, Kabal, Matta, Khwarzakhela and total sample of 350 students were selected randomly. All the 80 formal students from the govt. Jahanzeb degree college were selected for sampling. After the collection of the data, analysis was carried out by t-test independent sample. Following is detail of population and sample:

Population of the study

Formal Students	Non-formal Students	Total
80	1500	1580

Sample of the Study

Formal Students	Non-formal Students	Total
80	350	430

Sources of Data

The informants were selected according to the study objectives so that comparison be made between their study habits from district Swat. The participants from formal education were selected from Govt. College Swat and non-formal students were selected from AIOU from district Swat comprising of seven tehsils. Participants from both forms of education were enrolled in the M. Ed program.

Research Tool

For data collection purposes, a questionnaire was used. Questionnaire of study habits was developed by consulting the literature on the study habits and some students were interviewed about their academic activities a total number of 9 statements were prepared covering three categories of study habits i.e., time management skills, writing skills, and reading skills. Complete scrutiny and judgment of the items was made by the subject experts of education and amended in accordance with their suggestions. A five-point rating scale such as rarely, sometimes, frequently, generally, almost always was used and a pilot testing was carried out on a group of 20 students.

Internal consistency of the questionnaire was checked, and the coefficient alpha value was found satisfactory. Test-retest reliability score was found significant at $\alpha=.01$, and the true score variance was high, error score variance was found less ensured our questionnaire is reliable. Face validity was checked by the educational experts for this questionnaire

and for the content validity correlation and one-way ANOVA tests were employed and the results were found satisfactory.

The questionnaire was distributed personally and by email after seeking necessary permissions from the institutional heads. All the selected participants responded, and the data was collected.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed by mean score and independent sample t-test. The results and findings are as follows.

Table 1

Time Management of Study habits (F=80, NFE=350, N=430)

Time Management of Study habits		N	Mean	St. D	t-value	p-value
Time Monitoring	F Stud	80	4.6	0.71	11.11	0.00
	NFE Stud	350	3.95	1.0		
Monthly chart and Daily Planner	F Stud	80	4.7	0.56	23	0.00
	NFE Stud	350	3.4	1.2		
More time to Difficult Courses	F Stud	80	4.6	0.77	14	0.00
	NFE Stud	350	3.8	1.1		

*F Stud=formal students, NFE Stud= Non-formal Students

This table explains time management of formal students' study habits versus non-formal students' study habits. The results showed a significant difference between the mean scores of the students' study habits from the two different modes formal and non-formal. The formal students mean score is higher showing that they are significantly better in the time management study habit from the non-formal students.

Table 2

Study Habits for Reading Skills (F=80, NFE=350, N=430)

*F Stud=formal students, NFE Stud= Non-formal Students

Table 2 demonstrates comparison of formal students' study habits versus non-formal students' study habits while reading. The result obtained clearly showed that the formal students mean score is higher on the parameters "Before class I am well prepared by completing all readings" and "I use library and internet resources, when needed" whereas non-formal student's mean score is higher on the parameter "I recite loud to memorize the material and highlight important ideas while reading".

The result obtained thus concluded that the formal students' study habits are better than the non-formal students except on the parameter I recite loud to memorize the material and highlight important ideas while reading.

Table 3

Study Habits for Writing Skills (F=80, NFE=350, N=430)

Study Habits for Writing Skills	Respondents	N	Mean	St. D	t-value	p-value
Write and solve assignments by myself.	F Stud	80	4.0	0.8	17	0.00
	NFE Stud	350	2.2	1.5		
	F Stud	80	4.7	0.76	14	0.00
Study Habits for Reading Skills		N	Mean	St. D	t-value	p-value
Well prepared by completing all readings before class.	F Stud	80	4.0	1.1	2.2	0.32
	NFE Stud	350	3.8	1.0		
	F Stud	80	4.7	0.76	14	0.00
Use of library and internet for reading	NFE Stud	350	3.6	1.3		
	F Stud	80	2.9	1.4	16.85	0.00
	NFE Stud	350	4.1	0.95		
Loud reading to memorize lesson, and highlight important ideas while reading	F Stud	80	2.9	1.4	16.85	0.00
	NFE Stud	350	4.1	0.95		
	F Stud	80	2.9	1.4	16.85	0.00

Use of library & internet writing assignments	NFE Stud	350	3.6	1.3		
Write and prepare own notes	F Stud	80	4.1	0.95	16.85	0.00
	NFE Stud	350	2.9	1.4		

*F Stud=formal students, NFE Stud= Non-formal Students

The results showed a significant difference between the mean scores of the student's study habits from the two different modes formal and non-formal. The formal students' mean score is higher showing that they are significantly better in the time management study habits from the non-formal students.

Findings and Discussions

Findings of the study indicated significant difference between the mean scores of the students' study habits from the two different modes formal and non-formal in time management. The high mean score of formal students in the category of "time management" indicated that they are more efficient than non-formal students in terms of monitoring their time by themselves. So, they are self-directed towards their tasks. This may be since formal students have assignments and study tasks on daily basis which keep them triggered with their study tasks on time. They might be submitting their projects and other related materials to their teachers in face-to-face classes on a regular basis.

Mean score also indicated that formal students have a monthly chart and daily weak planner than non-formal students. This is again due to the nature of the academic calendar as formal students must go to their institutes daily, they encounter weekly/monthly assessments that's why weekly and monthly planners are prepared by them. It is also not said that non-formal students don't have any monthly or semester planner. Their NFE organization gives them a full fledge semester planner in which they are supposed to attend their workshops, submit assignment, and appear in final exams. But with all these conditions which are similar in formal and non-formal students, NFE students are not as efficient in meeting their study planner as done by formal students.

It is also found from the analysis (Table 1) that formal students give more time to difficult courses than non-formal students. This can be discussed that it might be due to the availability of resources or experts available to formal students than non-formal students. But overall, it is found that in the construct of time management, formal students are better than non-formal students. These findings are supported by Nousheen (2002) indicating that students' who manage their time efficiently lead towards success so "proper investment of time in students' life is much more important. The actual amount of study time required by an individual depends on his speed and efficiency in the work and his preparation and adaptability for each type of work in which he / she is engaged".

Regarding study habits and reading skills the study indicated that formal students mean score is higher on the parameter of "class preparation in reading before the class". It indicated that formal students did all necessary readings before they had to join the class. This again may be attributed to the formal students' encounter and interaction with all subject teachers daily. Since non-formal students don't appear and interact with teachers daily, they might be less efficient in doing necessary courses or topic readings before class.

It is also indicated from findings (Table2) that formal students pay regular visits to library than non-formal students. This may be due to their daily assignments and routine assessment projects which are given by different teachers daily. Since non-formal students have semester planner, they visit online websites and go to nearest libraries for assignment purposes. It was found that non-formal student's mean score is higher on the parameter "I recite loud to memorize the material and highlight important ideas while reading". This indicated that memorization skills of NFE students are better than formal students.

Study found in the construct of "study habits and writing skills" that mean scores of the student's study habits formal students' mean score is higher showing that they are significantly better in the time management study habits from the non-formal students. Formal students are better when they have to 'write and solve assignments by themselves'; they have to 'use library and internet resources for writing assignments'; and they have to 'write and prepare their own notes for the study'. So overall it is found that formal students' study habits are better than non-formal students.

The results showed a significant difference between the mean scores of the student's study habits from the two different modes formal and non-formal. The.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to explore the study habits of students in formal and non-formal students, considering the special needs and learning requirements shaped by the geography of the region and the local environment. It is concluded from the study that formal students are better than non-formal students from the Swat area in their time management skills, reading, and writing skills. The non-formal students from the Swat area do not manage their time management properly, they are less engaged in their studies, and they prioritize their other engagements such as work and family over their studies. There may be several other factors that need to be explored that are hurdles in developing the study habits of the non-formal students i.e., late dispatch of learning materials, late confirmations of admissions, etc. from the AIOU. Overall, it is concluded that the study habits of the formal students are better than the non-formal students in the Swat District.

The following recommendations are made in view of the findings of the study.

- Non-formal students from the area of district Swat may be motivated, encouraged, and inspired for the enhancement of their study skills.
- The non-formal educational institute i.e., AIOU may develop strategies and techniques for engaging their independent and isolated non-formal students in studies to write their assignments on their own, and the students should be provided and guided enough study materials at the proper time during the start of the study period of the semester.”

Recommendations

- It is recommended that to overcome the challenges login and password, students’ online facilitation services may be activated, and auto login password service may be introduced by AIOU authorities.
- To overcome uploading assignment and downloading study materials issues, more swift centres may be established in far flung areas especially in Chitral so that students may access and resolve their issues.
- The challenges of internet connectivity, low internet signals etc. authorities of AIOU may provide internet devices/USBs on rent or small installment loans so that more students may be facilitated in remotes areas.
- Students face competent teachers’ issues which may be tackled by giving in-service training to tutors before commencement of workshops and their evaluation form may be made mandatory by students after completion of workshops.
- Teacher-student communication issues may be tackled by giving orientation to teachers to use immediacy teaching practices during their online sessions.

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