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The Impact of Study Habits on Academic performance: A Meta-Analysis

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ABSTRACT: This meta-analysis investigates the relationship between students' study habits and their academic performance across a range of educational levels and cultural settings. The study synthesizes findings from fifteen empirical studies selected through a systematic review of academic databases. These studies employed various research methodologies, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method designs. They examined the impact of behaviors such as time management, note-taking, goal setting, and self-testing on academic outcomes. The analysis reveals a positive association between effective study habits and academic performance. However, the strength of this relationship varies depending on factors such as educational level, cultural background, gender, learning environment, and institutional support. While many studies report a significant correlation, others show weak or non-significant results, highlighting the complexity of this relationship and the influence of contextual variables. This meta-analysis underscores the importance of integrating structured study skills training into educational programs and developing targeted interventions tailored to students' individual needs and learning contexts. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of how study behaviors affect academic success and offer practical implications for educators, academic advisors, and policymakers aiming to enhance student learning outcomes.

KEYWORDS: Academic performance, Self-regulated learning, Study habits, Time management

INTRODUCTION

Academic performance is widely regarded as a core indicator of both student achievement and the effectiveness of educational institutions, especially within today's increasingly competitive and globalized academic environment. Among the various cognitive, emotional, and environmental contributors to success, study habits have consistently emerged as a significant and adaptable determinant of academic outcomes. These habits include a variety of learning strategies such as managing time efficiently, setting academic goals, taking comprehensive notes, engaging in self-testing, and maintaining focus. Gaining insight into how these practices affect student performance is crucial for developing targeted educational interventions that support diverse learners across different academic contexts.

According to Credé and Kuncel (2008), study habits, skills, and attitudes represent a critical "third pillar" of college-level academic success often exceeding the predictive power of standardized assessments and prior academic achievement. Supporting this claim, Elango and Manimozhi (2021) conducted a meta-analysis of thirty studies and found a moderately strong positive correlation ($r = 0.519$) between effective study practices and academic performance. These findings highlight the substantial role that intentional learning behaviors can play in enhancing academic outcomes.

However, this relationship is not universally consistent. Research by Tus (2020) and Tus et al. (2020) found no statistically significant association between study habits and academic outcomes among high school students in the Philippines. These discrepancies suggest that the effectiveness of study strategies may be influenced by contextual factors such as educational stage, cultural norms, assessment methods, and student motivation. In support of this, Cerna and Pavliuchenko (2015) observed that international students' study practices were shaped by cultural orientation students from individualistic cultures tended to engage more proactively in their learning than those from collectivist backgrounds.

Fong et al. (2021) highlighted the complex, multi-dimensional nature of study habits by analyzing the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI). They introduced a three-factor framework comprising affective/effort, anxiety-rousing, and cognitive dimensions to explain how different aspects of study behavior contribute to academic success. Additionally, self-regulated learning strategies such as goal-setting, planning, and self-monitoring have shown strong predictive value in online learning environments (Kizilcec et al., 2016), emphasizing the growing importance of adaptive strategies in digital education.

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Given the varied results found in existing research, there is a clear need to synthesize these findings through a comprehensive review. While several studies (e.g., Siahi & Maiyio, 2015; Rabia et al., 2017) support a strong positive connection between effective study behaviors and academic achievement, others (e.g., Kaur & Singh, 2020) indicate weaker or even negative correlations. Moreover, experimental evidence from Richland, Kornell, and Kao (2009) suggests that unsuccessful attempts at retrieval, such as through pretesting, can still improve long-term retention thus broadening the conceptual understanding of effective study methods.

In light of these diverse perspectives, this meta-analysis seeks to systematically examine the extent to which study habits affect academic performance. It draws on findings from fifteen empirical studies selected for their methodological rigor and relevance across different educational, cultural, and disciplinary contexts. The reviewed research includes both qualitative and quantitative studies involving learners at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

The primary objective of this meta-analysis is to uncover consistent trends, identify influential variables, and evaluate the contextual conditions under which study habits impact academic success. The insights derived are intended to inform educators, academic advisors, and policy developers in designing behavior-focused interventions and curricula. Additionally, these findings hold particular relevance for under-resourced or post-conflict academic settings, where student success often hinges on the ability to engage in self-regulated and independent learning.

In conclusion, this study addresses the urgent need for evidence-based clarity regarding the role of study habits in shaping academic outcomes. By synthesizing a diverse body of research, the meta-analysis aims to resolve conflicting findings, highlight the most effective learning behaviors, and support informed improvements in educational practice across a variety of learning environments.

METHODOLOGY

This meta-analysis employed a systematic, evidence-based approach to identify, review, and synthesize empirical findings on the relationship between students' study habits and academic performance. A comprehensive literature search was conducted using online academic databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, JSTOR, and university library repositories. The search utilized combinations of key terms including study habits, academic performance, learning strategies, student achievement, and study skills, combined with Boolean operators (e.g., AND, OR) to maximize coverage.

Over 50 articles published between 2000 and 2023 were initially screened based on their titles, abstracts, and keywords. After removing duplicates and assessing the relevance of content, 15 studies were selected for inclusion. The selection criteria were as follows:

- The study focused on the relationship between study habits and academic performance.
- It included empirical data (quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods).
- Academic performance was measured using valid indicators such as GPA, exam scores, or course grades.
- The article was published in peer-reviewed journals or academically credible sources.
- Sufficient methodological transparency was provided (e.g., sample size, instruments, analysis techniques).

The included studies spanned multiple countries and academic levels from secondary education to higher education and represented diverse research methodologies. Data were extracted using a standardized template capturing details such as author(s), year, research design, sample characteristics, instruments used, and key findings.

Given the heterogeneity of research designs and measures used across studies, a qualitative synthesis approach was adopted. Rather than performing statistical meta-analysis (e.g., effect size pooling), the current study thematically analyzed and compared findings across contexts. Patterns of consistency, contradictions, and contextual influences (e.g., cultural, technological, or motivational factors) were identified to draw meaningful conclusions.

This integrative method allowed for a rich understanding of how study habits influence academic performance, while also recognizing the complexity and variability of educational settings. The structured comparative matrix enabled cross-study analysis and informed the interpretation of results in relation to the broader educational literature.

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Meta -Analysis

NO	Name of The Articles	Nature of The Study	Year	Authors	Sample & Instrument	Findings
1	A Study on Study Habits and Academic Performance of Students	Quantitative	2017	Mahwish Rabia, Naima Mubarak, Hira Tallat, Wajiba Nasir	570 students from two colleges (Govt. Allama Iqbal College for Women, Sialkot, and Govt. Technical College for Boys, Sialkot) Instrument: researcher-developed questionnaire	There is a significant relationship between study habits and academic performance of students, as confirmed by the chi-square test.
2	Influence of Study Habits on Academic Performance of International College Students in Shanghai	Mixed-methods	2015	Miguel A. Cerna, Ksenia Pavliuchenko	174 sophomore students enrolled in international programs at Donghua University, Shanghai Instruments: Self-Reported Study Habits Inventory (SR-SHI)	Study habits significantly influence academic performance, with cultural factors affecting habits; high-performing students from low-context/individualistic countries show proactive behaviors, while low-performing students from high-context/collectivistic countries are less engaged.
3	Study of the relationship between study habits and academic achievement of students: A case of Spicer Higher Secondary School, India	Correlational Study	2015	Evans Atsiaya Siahi, Julius K. Maiyio	85 9th standard students at Spicer Higher Secondary School, India Instrument: Study Habits Inventory by M.N. Palsane	A positive correlation (r = 0.6) exists between study habits and academic achievement; students with good study habits perform better academically, while poor study habits correlate with lower performance.
4	Attitudes, Study Habits, and Academic Performance of Junior High School Students in Mathematics	Quantitative	2019	Reylan Capuno, Renante Necesario, Jonathan Olores Etcuban, Raymond Espina, Gengen Padillo, Ramil Mangullimotan	177 Grade 9 students from a public national high school in Mandaue City Division, Cebu, Philippines Instrument: Attitudes Towards Mathematics	Weak positive correlation between attitudes (self-confidence, value, enjoyment) and academic performance ($p < 0.01$), Negligible positive correlation between study habits and performance ($r = 0.227$, $p = 0.002$), Neutral attitudes toward math (mean = 3.33/5), except positive for "value of math" (mean = 3.88/5). Average math grade: 80.93 (fair satisfactory).

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					Inventory (ATMI) (Tapia & Marsh, 2004)Students' Study Habits Assessment Scale (SSHAS) (Charles-Ogan & Alamina, 2014)First-quarter mathematics grades (from school records)	
5	Meta-Analyzing the Factor Structure of the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory	Quantitative	2021	Carlton J. Fong, Jihyun Lee, Megan R. Krou, Meagan A. Hoff, Karen Johnston-Ashton, Cassandra Gonzales, S. Natasha Beretvas	86 studies (N = 60,090) from K-12 and postsecondary settings across multiple countries Instrument: Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI), (MOT), Selecting Main Ideas (SMI), Self-Testing (SFT)	Model C (Olivarez & Tallent-Runnels, 1998) fit best: three latent factors affective/effort (TMT, CON, ATT, MOT), anxiety-rousing (ANX, SMI, TST), cognitive (INP, STA, SFT), Strong model fit (CFI = 0.989, RMSEA = 0.014, SRMR = 0.029), Language moderated correlations (p = 0.026); grade level and LASSI version did not. Guides curriculum design and reduces research errors using three factors.
6	The Influence of Study Attitudes and Study Habits on the Academic Performance of the Students	Correlational Study	2020	Jhoselle Tus	130 senior high school students in a Catholic School in Bulacan, Philippines Instrument: Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA Form H) developed by Holtzman and Brown	Study attitudes and study habits do not significantly affect senior high school students' academic performance.
7	The Learners' Study Habits and Its Relation on Their Academic Performance	Correlational Study	2020	Jhoselle Tus, Francis Rayo, Reymark Lubo, Mark Anthony Cruz	126 Grade 11 senior high school learners Instrument: Palsane and	The study found that the respondents' study habits were at a relatively average level, and there was no significant relationship between study habits and academic performance. Enhancing students' study habits, particularly in

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					Sharma Study Habit Inventory	note-taking, reading ability, and health, is relevant for improving academic performance.
8	Study Habits, Skills, and Attitudes: The Third Pillar Supporting Collegiate Academic Performance	Quantitative	2008	Marcus Credé and Nathan R. Kuncel	72,431 college students (from 344 independent samples) Instrument: Various study habit, skill, and attitude inventories, including the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (SSHA) and Learning and Study Skills Inventory (LASSI)	Study habits, skills, and attitudes are significant predictors of academic performance, often independent of high school grades and standardized test scores. Study motivation and skills showed the strongest relationships with academic outcomes, while academic-specific anxiety negatively impacted performance. Overall, SHSAs are essential for predicting collegiate success.
9	Meta-Analysis of Study Habits and Academic Achievement	Quantitative	2021	M. Elango and G. Manimozhi	30 studies based on study habits and academic performance Instrument: Study Habits Inventories/ Questionnaires	There is a significant relationship between study habits and academic achievement, with a pooled correlation value of 0.519. The analysis indicates that study habits significantly influence academic performance, supporting the hypothesis of a positive relationship.
10	The Pretesting Effect: Do Unsuccessful Retrieval Attempts Enhance Learning?	Experimental	2009	Lindsey E. Richland, Nate Kornell, Liche Sean Kao	63 participants in Experiment 1; 61 in Experiment 2; 64 in Experiment 3; 158 in Experiment 4; 76 in Experiment 5 Instrument: Essay on vision with test questions (fill-in-the-blank and short-answer format)	Unsuccessful retrieval attempts from pretesting enhanced long-term retention of material compared to extended study. Pretests improved recall of tested items, even when the attempts were unsuccessful. The benefits persisted after a one-week delay, suggesting that testing serves as a valuable learning event.

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11	Study strategies of college students: Are self-testing and scheduling related to achievement?	Quantitative	2011	Marissa K. Hartwig and John Dunlosky	324 undergraduates Instrument: Survey assessing study habits, including self-testing and scheduling strategies	Self-testing and rereading were positively associated with GPA. Low performers were more likely to study late at night and focus on impending deadlines, while high performers planned their study schedules. Spacing study sessions was related to the use of more effective strategies, but its direct relationship with GPA was not significant.
12	Self-regulated learning strategies predict learner behavior and goal attainment in Massive Open Online Courses	Quantitative	2016	René F. Kizilcec, Mar Pérez-Sanagustín, Jorge J. Maldonado	4,831 online learners across six MOOCs Instrument: Survey on self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies and individual characteristics, combined with interaction records from course content	Goal setting and strategic planning were significant positive predictors of course goal attainment, while help seeking negatively predicted goal attainment. Learners with stronger SRL skills were more likely to revisit course materials, particularly assessments. Individual characteristics, such as prior experience and motivation, also significantly influenced SRL strategies.
13	Influence of Assessment Practices on Business Education Students' Study Habits and Academic Performance in Colleges of Education	Survey	2023	David Akintunde Akinlabi	132 lecturers and 322 final year NCE students Instrument: Questionnaires titled "Influence of Assessment Practices on Business Education Students' Study Habits and Academic Performance Questionnaire" (IAPBESSHAPQ) and "Students'	Common assessment practices included end-of-semester examinations, written tests, and classroom exercises. The study found that assessment practices significantly influenced study habits and academic performance, with various assessment methods impacting student engagement and achievement.

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					Academic Performance Proforma" (SAPP)	
14	Study Habits and Academic Performance: A Comparative Analysis	Quantitative	2020	Jasgeet Kaur and Dr. Pankaj Singh	120 secondary school students (60 males and 60 females) Instrument: Study Habits Scale (Rani & Jaidka, 2015) and CGPA from the last exam	There was a non-significant negative correlation ($r = -0.32$) between study habits and academic performance. A significant difference was found between study habits and academic performance ($p < .05$), with no significant gender differences observed. Males had lower study habits compared to females ($t = -3.07$, $p < .05$).
15	The Role of Study Skills in Academic Achievement of Students: A Closer Focus on Gender	Quantitative	2008	Shawana Fazal, Shaukat Hussain, Muhammad Iqbal Majoka, Sobia Masood	300 intermediate students (173 girls, 127 boys) from 10 colleges in Abbottabad, Pakistan Instrument: Modified Scale for Study Habits and Attitudes (Ansari, 1983; 40 items, Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.83$)	Significant positive correlations between academic achievement and time management ($r = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$), reading, and note-taking skills; no significant correlation for other skills (e.g., rote-learning). - High achievers used a broader range of study skills compared to low achievers. - Girls outperformed boys in overall study skills usage ($p< 0.05$). -Recommends explicit study skills training, particularly for boys, to enhance academic performance.

COMPARISON OF THE ARTICLES

This meta-analysis synthesizes findings from fifteen (n=15) empirical studies conducted across varied educational levels and cultural contexts to examine the relationship between study habits and academic performance. The reviewed studies range from correlational and experimental designs to large-scale meta-analyses and mixed-methods investigations. The comparison highlights common trends, methodological variations, and contextual influences shaping the relationship between students' study behaviors and academic outcomes.

Several studies confirmed a positive correlation between study habits and academic performance. For example, Rabia et al. (2017), in a quantitative study involving five hundred seventy (n=570) college students in Pakistan, found a significant relationship between study habits and performance using a chi-square analysis. Similarly, Siahi and Maiyio (2015) conducted a

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correlational study with eighty-five (n= 85) secondary school students in India, reporting a strong positive correlation (r = 0.6) between effective study habits and academic achievement.

On a broader scale, Credé and Kuncel (2008) performed a large-scale meta-analysis with data from seventy-two thousand four hundred thirty-one (n = 72,431) students across three hundred forty-four (n = 344) independent samples. Their findings showed that study habits, skills, and attitudes significantly predicted academic success, often more strongly than standardized tests or prior academic records. Elango and Manimozhi (2021), in another meta-analysis of thirty (n=30) studies, reported a pooled correlation value of r = 0.519, further supporting the argument that good study habits are strongly linked to academic performance.

Fazal et al. (2008) emphasized the importance of specific skills such as time management, reading, and note-taking. Their study of three hundred (n=300) intermediate students revealed significant positive correlations between these habits and academic achievement. Notably, female students demonstrated more effective study habits than their male counterparts, suggesting potential gender-based differences in learning strategies.

Cerna and Pavliuchenko (2015), in a mixed-methods study with one hundred seventy-four (n=174) international students in Shanghai, highlighted how cultural background influences study habits. Their findings revealed that students from individualistic societies exhibited more proactive and independent study behaviors, while those from collectivist cultures showed less engagement, leading to differences in academic performance.

Despite the general trend of positive associations, some studies reported contrasting results. Tus (2020) and Tus et al. (2020), in studies involving one hundred thirty (n=130) and one hundred twenty-six (n= 126) Filipino high school students respectively, found no statistically significant relationship between study habits and academic performance. These findings point to the possibility that certain contextual or motivational factors may mediate the effectiveness of study behaviors.

Kaur and Singh (2020), examining one hundred twenty (n=120) secondary school students, observed a weak negative correlation (r = –0.32) between study habits and academic performance. Although gender differences were found in the frequency and quality of study habits females displaying stronger habits the overall influence on performance was statistically insignificant.

Capuno et al. (2019) examined the relationship between students' attitudes, study habits, and academic performance in mathematics among one hundred seventy-seven (n=177) junior high school students in the Philippines. The study reported a weak but statistically significant correlation between study habits and performance (r = 0.227, p = 0.002), suggesting that while study behaviors contributed to outcomes, other factors such as enjoyment, self-confidence, and perceived value of the subject also played key roles.

Fong et al. (2021) provided further nuance through a meta-analysis of eighty-six (n = 86) studies using the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (LASSI). Their findings identified three latent factors affective/effort, anxiety-rousing, and cognitive that significantly influenced academic performance. The study emphasized the role of language and cultural context in moderating these effects, offering a more structured framework for future research and curriculum design.

Experimental research also contributes valuable insight. Richland, Kornell, and Kao (2009), across five experiments with a combined total of over four hundred (n≈422) participants, demonstrated that unsuccessful retrieval attempts (pretesting) can enhance long-term learning more effectively than traditional study. This expands the definition of productive study habits to include testing as an active learning strategy.

Hartwig and Dunlosky (2011), working with three hundred twenty-four (n = 324) undergraduate students, found that self-testing and planned study scheduling were positively associated with GPA. Their findings indicated that high-performing students tend to engage in forward planning, while low-performing students often rely on last-minute study practices.

In a large-scale study of online learners, Kizilcec et al. (2016) analyzed data from four thousand eight hundred thirty-one (n = 4,831) participants enrolled in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). They reported that goal setting and strategic planning significantly predicted course completion and success, while unproductive habits such as passive help-seeking were negatively correlated with goal attainment.

Finally, Akinlabi (2023), in a mixed sample of four hundred fifty-four (n = 454) Nigerian lecturers and final-year students, found that varied assessment practices directly influenced students' study behaviors and academic achievement. The study highlighted that institutional practices, such as frequent evaluations and structured feedback, can shape how students approach their studies.

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Summary of Patterns

Collectively, the findings affirm that effective study habits are generally associated with improved academic outcomes. However, the strength and consistency of this relationship vary depending on several moderating factors, including educational level, cultural context, gender, motivational orientation, and institutional support systems. This diversity reinforces the need for context-sensitive interventions and further exploration into how these habits can be cultivated through educational policy and practice.

CONCLUSION

This meta-analysis aimed to explore the connection between students' study habits and their academic performance by analyzing findings from fifteen (n = 15) empirical studies conducted across various educational levels, cultural backgrounds, and methodological frameworks. The core objective was to assess whether consistent trends exist in how different study practices influence academic success and to examine the contextual factors that may influence this relationship.

Overall, the synthesis reveals a largely positive and meaningful link between effective study practices such as time management, goal setting, self-assessment, note-taking, and structured planning and student achievement. Research conducted by Credé and Kuncel (2008), Elango and Manimozhi (2021), and Hartwig and Dunlosky (2011) supports the idea that such behaviors serve as reliable predictors of academic outcomes at both the secondary and post-secondary levels. However, other studies (e.g., Tus, 2020; Kaur & Singh, 2020) present contrasting evidence, showing weak or statistically insignificant relationships. These discrepancies suggest that the impact of study habits may depend on various mediating factors, including cultural setting, institutional support, gender, academic level, and student motivation.

Additionally, the findings highlight that study behaviors are multi-faceted, encompassing affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions (Fong et al., 2021). The evolution of learning environments particularly the shift toward digital and online education has also reshaped how students engage with and benefit from different study strategies (Kizilcec et al., 2016). Therefore, although the advantages of strong study habits are widely recognized, their effectiveness should be understood within a broader, more integrated context.

On a practical level, the conclusions of this study offer important implications for educators, curriculum developers, and academic advisors. Embedding structured training in study strategies especially at the secondary and early tertiary stages can significantly improve students' learning management. Furthermore, developing personalized, culturally aware interventions is key to ensuring that students from diverse backgrounds are supported effectively in cultivating productive academic behaviors.

It should be acknowledged that this meta-analysis was based on qualitative synthesis rather than quantitative effect size pooling, which may limit the scope of its generalizability. Future studies would benefit from employing statistical meta-analytic techniques, investigating moderating variables in greater depth, and incorporating longitudinal data to better examine the causal links between study habits and academic achievement.

In conclusion, although study habits are not the only factor influencing academic performance, they represent a vital and adaptable element that can be nurtured to improve learning outcomes. Encouraging students to adopt self-directed, strategically structured learning behaviors especially through context-sensitive educational initiatives can lead to deeper academic engagement and stronger overall achievement.

Declaration of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest. This study received no external funding

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