

STUDY HABIT AND ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNERS WITH PARENTS WORKING LOCALLY AND ABROAD

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ABSTRACT: Study habit (SH) has consistently been found to influence academic achievements (AA) of students. Despite the increasing number of investigation on the relationship of the two variables, there remains a gap in the conduct of the same investigation contextualized with students having parents working abroad and locally. The data of this cross-sectional study revealed that there is a significant difference in the SH of the respondents across gender favouring females. On the other hand, no gender difference was found in the AA of the respondents. In addition, a significant relationship between SH and AA performance of the respondents exists. However, no significant difference was found in the SH and AA between students with parents working abroad and locally.

Keywords: Study habit, Academic Achievement, Gender, ESL

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

[1] simply defined study habit as “*how one studies* (p.1)”. [2] provided an elaborate definition by claiming that ‘*study habit is buying out a dedicated scheduled and uninterrupted time to apply one's self to the task of learning*’. Therefore, study habit is a routine developed and followed by students intended for activities improving learning, and these activities are, but not limited to, review of the material, self-testing, rehearsal of learned materials and studying [3]. Moreover, the definition suggests that study habits relate to the practice of students devoting time for study or performance of tasks related to learning. Supportive of this assertion is the claim of authors in [4], explaining that the learnings students do while inside the classroom and outside of it form part of the learners’ study habit. Studying outside class hours and outside of the classroom is a must because students are not expected to learn everything about a subject from their teachers alone and only during their classes [4].

On the other hand, academic achievement (AA) has become a concern and the main issue for many learners, parents, and educationists. The reason for explaining this is that academic achievement takes an essential role in the career advancement of individuals [5]. Simply put, students with good academic standing are expected to get good jobs compared to those who are academically underachievers. Therefore, good grades mean a good job, and this association is not only anecdotal in nature, but supported with empirical studies such as that of others [6], who opined that professional career that soon students take depends much on their level of academic achievement.

Frantic efforts were made to determine factors affecting students’ performance in school, eventually their achievements. Numerous variables have been found to have an effect on students’ academic performance. Some [4], noted intelligence, infrastructural facilities; good libraries among others are some factors influencing students’ academic performance. In [7], authors claimed that academic achievement and student standing are results of tests and examinations they take; therefore, test anxiety is an important determining factor of students’ academic success. Another factor found influencing students’ academic

performance is the state of home [8]. The same authors contend that healthy homes provide emotional security and serve as a stimulating environment for children resulting to students developing their learning abilities and eventually their achievement at school. Others [9], differently claimed that the non-use of the child's mother tongue results in poor academic standing of students because students find school non-inviting.

Evidently, as provided by the results of various researches, no single factor influences academic performance of learners [10], instead, numerous variables were identified to significantly impact learning achievement. However, some empirical studies concluded that study habit is one of the greatest factors that correlate with academic achievement. Elsewhere [11] and [12], claimed that the study habit of learners greatly influences their academic performance. Students with undeveloped study habit are doomed to fail in their examinations and expected to have poor scholastic performance. In a similar vein, others [13], claimed that problems students face relative to poor academic performance roots from poor study habit. Corroborating this is a more recent study elsewhere[5], which concluded that there is a significant positive effect of study habit on the grade point average of students.

There, however, remain limited investigations on study habits of English-as-second-language (ESL) students with parents working abroad. The context of having parents physically separated from children because of work is underserved by research let alone the investigation the inclusion of the variable of emotional quotient (EQ) in research. Influence of parental presence and involvement, especially of mothers, on study habits have become an interest of researchers (e.g. [14, 15]) in recent years. The increase in women's employment over the years and the entry and acceptance of women in paying jobs are two reasons seen for investigations aimed to determine differences in the achievement and study habits of children with working and non-working mothers.

The case of students with parents, either mother or father or both, working abroad is a unique case compared to those with employed parents. The case is that working parents

come home often and in most cases every day. The opportunity of personally seeing and assisting remain to those working domestically while the same does not hold true to those with parents working abroad. These supportive claims lay grounds for the need to investigate the SH and AA of ESL students whose parents are working abroad. The diaspora of professionals and an increase in overseas employment equates to a rise in the number of children left home.

The purpose of this study comes in multiple directions. First, it intends to determine the study habit and emotional quotient of students facing the challenge of having parents working abroad. Second, the study further compared the SH and AA of ESL students with parents working locally and abroad. Last, the study explored the influence of the factor SH on AA of the respondents and determines if a significant relationship can be drawn.

1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

his study intends to determine primarily the study habit, emotional quotient and academic achievement of the respondents, and make comparisons of the variables across gender and parental site of employment, employed locally or abroad. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the study habit of ESL students?
2. What is the academic achievement of ESL students?
3. Is there a significant difference in the study habit and academic achievement of the respondents when data are grouped according to gender and parent's site of employment?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the study habit and academic achievement of the respondents?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The main aim to describe the respondents SH and AA and to determine if a significant relationship exists between the main variables. As such, the study utilized as descriptive-quantitative-correlational design through the use of a survey questionnaire for the determination of the ESL students' SH. The choice for this approach in data gathering is informed by [16] who discussed that employing questionnaire as a means of data collection to large sample is an efficient and practical means.

2.2. PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

The participants are 100 ESL secondary school students with age ranging from 14-17. The mean age is 16.372 with standard deviation (SD) of 0.740. The participants are equally divided between sexes, male and female, and parent's site of employment, domestic and abroad.

2.3 RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The study adopted the Study Habit Questionnaire (SHQ) of [17]. A 10-item test with 5 scales – “never”, “almost never”, “sometimes”, “fairly often”, and “very often”. Out of the ten items, seven are negative statements.

Originally, the instrument was used for determining the SH of college students. However, for this current investigation, it was used for secondary school students. It was assumed that the subscales of the instrument are ‘universal’. It was noted that the different practices and experiences noted in the

instrument remain true for the respondents of the study; hence, no modifications on the items listed on the original instrument; however, there was a modification in the case of the scale. In this study, instead of using five, only four was used. This is to prevent the taking place of the ‘central tendency phenomenon’ in which respondents would simply choose the middle option without truly reflecting the truthfulness of the statements for their case and experience. Hence, the instrument's scale is as follows: ‘never’, ‘almost never’, ‘fairly often’, and ‘very often’. Therefore, with the made modification and varying context in which the instrument was originally used, the modified instrument was pilot tested to 100 students from another private institution that do not form part of the sampling frame. Fifty of the respondents for the pilot testing have parents working abroad, either their mother or father or both. The remaining half has parents working locally. Cronbach's alpha of 0.90 was the yielded reliability for the 10 items. Others [18], state that as a rule of thumb if the value of Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.9 it is considered as “*excellent*”; if the value of Cronbach's alpha is greater than 0.8 it is considered “*good*”; if it is greater than 0.7 it is regarded as “*acceptable*”; if greater than 0.6 it is remarked as “*questionable*”; if greater than 0.5 it is noted as “*poor*”; and if less than 0.5 it is claimed to be “*unacceptable*” (p.231). With reference to this, the instrument was deemed of highly reliable and all the items were included in the production of the final instrument.

2.4 PROCEDURE

A list of schools was first to produce to determine an ideal research site for the conduct of the study. Letters were sent to different school principal describing the purpose of the investigation and requesting data relative to how many students enrolled in their institution have parents working abroad. Communication was received from 5 schools although a total of 8 schools were given request letters. From the 5 schools, only one school have a good number of students with parents working abroad and the rest have very minimal number, most of which do not go beyond ten. The choice of the school has been based on this condition. A formal letter of request was sent to the school attached with the instrument to be used. The letter also included a request for access to students' grades. The clause of confidentiality in the handling of the data was made part of the letter submitted. A sample of informed letter of consent was also submitted reference of the Secondary School Principal. After approval of the request, the researchers scheduled a meeting with respective class advisers of the students. On the scheduled meeting, the researchers discussed the nature of the research and other related concerns. The consent form were then distributed and be asked to be signed by parents should they allow their respective son or daughter to participate in the study. For students who have both parents working abroad, the consent form was given to their guardians. The grades for three grading periods were first gathered through the respective advisers in a span of one week time. On the other hand, a definite date was set for the administration of the SHQ to all participants in the social hall which served as the venue for the one-time administration. On average, the students were able to answer the 10-item questionnaire within six minutes. The researchers personally

collect the instruments upon submission of the participants. Immediately, the submitted questionnaires were checked for double entry, no entry, and others that would make the questionnaire soiled and ineligible for inclusion in the analysis.

2.5 METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The code for gender is as follows: 1 for male and 2 for female. On the other hand, the code for parent’s site of work is 1 for working locally and 2 for working abroad. For the study habit, there are seven negative items (3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10) while the remaining items are positive (1, 2 and 7). For negative items, the reverse coding, as follows, is used: 4 for never, 3 for almost never, 2 for fairly often, and 1 for very often. Moreover, in determining the SH of the respondents, the mean (M) and SD will be used and to be interpreted with the following scale presented in Table 1.

Table 1.Study Habit Scale

Range	Description	Interpretation
3.25 - 4.0	Very Often	Good
2.50 - 3.24	Fairly Often	Somehow Good
1.75 - 2.49	Almost Never	Somehow Bad
1.0 - 1.74	Never	Bad

For the interpretation of students AA, grades will be given meaning through the use of table 2.0. These descriptions were taken from the Department of Education [19].

Table 2.Academic Achievement Scale

Range	Letter Grade	Description
90 and above	A	Advanced
85-89	P	Proficient
80-84	AP	Approaching Proficiency
75-79	D	Developing
Below 75	B	Beginning

To determine the SH and AA of the respondents, descriptive statistics, specifically, mean and standard deviation were used. On the other hand, to determine the significant difference of the respondents SH and AA performance across gender and parent's site of employment, T-test for an independent sample is the statistical tool utilized. Finally, for the determination of significant relation of the respondents' SH and AA, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient or Pearson r was employed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 OVERALL STUDY HABIT OF THE RESPONDENTS

To describe the basic feature of data on SH, descriptive statistics (M and SD) were used.

Table 3.Overall Study Habit of the respondents

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation
Study Habit	3.321	0.327

Note: 3.25 – 4.0 = Good; 2.50 – 3.24 = Somehow Good; 1.75 – 2.49 = Somehow Bad; 1.0 – 1.74 = Bad.

Table 1 presents the summary statistics of the quantitative variable, SH. It shows that minimum report for study habit made by the respondents is characterized as ‘somehow good’ (2.73). Moreover, none of the respondents reported having a ‘somehow bad’ or ‘bad’ SH.

In addition, on average, the respondents have reported having a ‘good’ (M=3.34, SD=0.333) study habit. This means that the respondents perceived themselves to be those who are able to allot time for studying. This result is interesting in the sense that it counters findings of existing investigations. In [20], it was found out that students do not devote enough time for study. Moreover, [21] explained that students are faced with the challenge of finding time to be devoted to studying. This can be alluded to the increasing complexity of activities students perform and the varied roles to be fulfilled apart from the increasing demand for education due to its standardization. The result suggesting that the respondents of this study are able to establish a routine for learning is something remarkable. Two assumptions for this finding are provided. One is that the school may have trained the students to develop their SH. Another, which is of pessimistic stance, is that students may have over-reported when answering the instrument.

3.1.2 SUBSCALE OF THE STUDY HABIT OF THE RESPONDENTS

The study habit is composed of three subscales in this study. These are access to notes, scheduling and ability to concentrate. Table 4 gives M and SD of the subscales.

Table 4.Subscales of the Study Habit of the respondents

Subscales	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
Access to note	3.572	0.486	Very Often
Scheduling	3.108	0.531	Fairly Often
Ability to concentrate	3.284	0.583	Very Often

Note: 3.25 – 4.0 = Very Often; 2.50 – 3.24 = Fairly Often; 1.75 – 2.49 = Almost Never; 1.0 – 1.74 = Never.

From table 4, it can be inferred that among the subscales, two (2) were reported to be performed ‘very often’ by the respondents, access to note (M=3.60, SD=0.488) and ability to concentrate (M=3.29, SD=0.594). Moreover, only 33 respondents reported having done scheduling ‘fairly often’ while the remaining number claimed to do it ‘very often’. In addition, in the case of the subscale ‘ability to concentrate’, none of the respondents claimed ‘never’ and only five (5) of the respondents claimed to have performed the subscale ‘almost never’. Addedly, thirty-seven (37) stated to be able to

concentrate on a 'fairly often' basis. The remainder of the participants (58) claimed to concentrate 'very often'. It can be further noticed that a little more than half claimed of having no trouble concentrating. This may mean that the respondents have trained themselves to remain focus realizing the importance of listening to their instructor during class hours or during lectures and discussions. This understanding may have been borne of their experience that class lectures and discussions most often than not provide the test items in examinations given to them.

Scheduling (M=3.12, SD=0.536) is, however, was only reported to be done 'fairly often'. The data show that only 1% of the respondents claimed to have 'never' made a good schedule for going over notes and completing homework, 10% claimed to have 'almost never' done scheduling, 51% reported to have scheduled review of their notes and completed homework on a 'fairly often' basis, and only 38% maintained to have scheduled learning over their notes and materials 'very often'.

This result to an extent reflects the claim of others as among the three subscales it is scheduling and remaining religious in following the set schedule for study is the trouble students have[21]. However, the trouble on scheduling is not completely true in the case of the high school ESL students in this study as suggested by the mean score (3.108) described as 'very often' and interpreted to be 'somehow good'.

3.2 ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF THE RESPONDENTS

Academic achievement of the respondents

Table 5 shows the AA of the respondents. The academic grades of the respondents were computed for average. In addition, the standard deviation and interpretation are also provided for analysis and interpretation. Further, the summary statistics, minimum and maximum, are included for reference.

Table 5. Academic Achievement of the respondents

Variable	Min.	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Description
Academic Achievement	77.96	91.53	85.31	3.35	Proficient

Note: 90 and above – advanced (A); 85 to 89 – proficient (P); 80 to 84 – approaching proficiency (AP); 75 to 79 – developing (D); and, below 75 – beginning (B)

Table 5 contains the descriptive statistics to describe the basic features of the data on AA. The data revealed provides that the academic achievement of the respondents ranges from 77.96 to 91.53. The data further revealed that none of the respondents have attained an academic score below 75. Moreover, only 4% of the total respondents have grades described as 'developing', 39% are of grades noted as 'approaching proficiency', 43% of the respondents' grades fall under 'proficient', and the remaining percentages (14%) of the respondents have grades characterized as 'advanced'.

Furthermore, the average academic grade (M=85.31, SD=3.35) of the respondents with a description of 'proficient' implies that the respondents of this research are of relatively good AA. Although [22] reported that poor academic performance is a global concern, the respondents' AA of this study is non-reflective of the said report. The data accounts no respondent with failing grades, and more than half (57%) of the total ESL students occupy the top two tiers of academic classification, advanced and proficient.

3.3 STUDY HABIT AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ACROSS GENDER AND PARENT'S SITE OF EMPLOYMENT

To analyze the significant difference on SH and AA of the respondents across dichotomous nominal variables gender (male and female) and parent's site of employment (locally and abroad), T-test for the independent sample was the statistical treatment employed. Table 6 contains the difference on the SH and AA of the ESL secondary students across gender and parent's site of employment (PSE).

As found in table 6, on the difference of SH across gender, the data (p-value = 0.004) is significant at alpha= 0.05. This means a significant difference exists on SH across gender favouring females. The data further revealed that, on average, the females have SH (3.409) described as 'good' while their counterparts have an SH (3.220) with a description of only 'somehow good'. This implies that females, in general, are better at concentrating, taking notes and scheduling as compared to boys. Moreover, the finding claiming the impact of gender on SH corroborates with the results of the studies of [23, 5, 24]. On the other hand, this result counters investigation results of [25] and [26] which claimed that gender has no influence on SH.

Gender influence on SH remains inconclusive.

Table 6. Difference matrix of the SH and AA of the respondents across gender PSE [Local (L) and Abroad (A)]

Gender	M	SD	Sig.	PSE	M	SD	Sig.
SH	M	3.22	0.26	0.004*	L	3.3	0.3
	F	3.41	0.35		A	3.2	0.3
AA	M	85.78	3.21	0.183	L	85.	3.2
	F	84.88	3.45		A	85.	3.5

Note: Significant at alpha = 0.05

However, the current study contextualized in case of ESL secondary school students contributes supporting result to the majority claim that gender difference exists on SH with females having better ones than males. Therefore, with this result, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in SH between males and females is rejected. However, for the AA as another main variable of the investigation, the p-value = 0.183 is greater than alpha = 0.05 which means that there is no significant difference on the AA

of respondents when grouped according to gender. Although the males (85.78) are slightly better academic performers than females (84.88), gender does not impact AA. Interestingly, studies claiming varying results on AA as regards gender. [24] found that females significantly differ in academic achievement as compared to males. The study concluded that girls are better at academics than boys. However, the work of [27], at an extent supports the result of this present study that males are better at AA than females when they found that females are more stressed are faced with more health issues resulting to poorer academic outcomes compared to boys. It must be noted however that the difference found in this study is not significant; therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in AA between males and females is accepted.

On the account of SH between students with parents working locally and abroad, the data (p-value = 0.257) is greater than alpha = 0.05. This means that there is no significant difference in the SH of the respondents with parents working locally with those whose parents' are working abroad. Hence, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the SH between students with parents working locally and abroad is accepted. Further, it can be noted that although no significant difference exists students with parents working locally (M-3.305) have better SH compared with those whose parents are overseas workers (3.275). This result can allude to the presence and direct supervision parents can provide to their children which is non-existent for those parents whose employment is set abroad.

For the AA between students with parents working abroad and locally, the p-value equals to 0.530 is greater than alpha = 0.05 which means that there is no significant difference in the AA of students with parents working abroad as compared to those with parents locally employed. This result is contrary to popular belief that those students with non-overseas workers have better academic performance. The said belief is justified as parents who could come home every day after work could provide parental support directly to their children. They could give reminders and provide help when needed. However, this current study provides a contrary result. Moreover, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference on the AA of the respondents across the parent's site of employment is accepted.

3.4 SIGNIFICANT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SH AND AA OF THE RESPONDENTS

To determine the significant relationship between the respondents' SH and AA, Pearson Product Moment Coefficient or Pearson *r* was the statistical tool employed. Table 7 provides the correlation matrix between SH and AA.

Table 7. Correlation: Study Habit and Academic Achievement

Variables	Pearson <i>r</i>	Sig.	Interpretation
Study Academic Habit Achievement	0.201	0.045*	Significant

Note: *Significant at alpha = 0.05

The data (p-value = 0.045) is less than alpha = 0.05 which means that there is a significant relationship between the variables SH and AA. It further means that SH significantly

correlates with AA. This implies that respondents scoring high in the study habit scale are the same respondents with high academic score. Conversely, respondents scoring low in the SH scale are the same respondents with low academic grade. Therefore, SH influences AA. This finding supports the trend found in the literature that claims SH impacting AA. This finding is consistent with claims and results of numerous studies such as that of [1-3, 5, 28- 30]. These investigations maintained that refined study technique results in better academic gains. Moreover, this study does not only add to the number of researches on SH and AA. Instead, this study has further contextualized the influence of SH toward AA as the investigation is directed to ESL secondary school students. Further, the null hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between SH and AA is rejected.

4. CONCLUSION

In light of the results of the study, the following are the conclusions reached:

First, the subscale that deals with scheduling is the most challenging component of SH for students. However, it must be noted that the respondents of the study have reported having 'good' access to note and concentration. It is inferred that because the respondents are able to take good notes and concentrate well during class hours the need to allot time for review has not always become a necessity for this set of respondents. Further, mastery of material may have been acquired by the students during class hours and class discussion.

Second, gender, as a variable, impacts SH but does not influence AA. Females are better in keeping schedules for doing homework and reviewing materials for mastery of the same compared to males. Moreover, sufficient evidence is found to determine that females are more efficient in taking notes and concentrating in class than males. The influence of gender on SH is found true in the case of ESL secondary students.

Third, no significant difference is found in both the SH and AA of the respondents as regards those whose parents are employed locally and abroad. Students with parents working abroad have SH and AA that are not substantially different from students with parents working locally.

Last, there is a significant correlation between the SH and AA of the ESL respondents with parents working abroad and locally. This result provides further contextualization of the relationship with the respondents bearing unique characteristics in this study.

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