



An investigation into the relationship between study habits and academic achievement of students at elementary level in Delhi

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Abstract

This Study was conducted to find out the answer of the questions such as: What are the study habits of students of elementary classes? Does any relationship exist between study habits and academic achievement? Do gender (male and female), type of school (govt. and private), and area of school (rural and urban) make any difference in the study habits of students of elementary classes? Does any difference exist in the study habits of high and low achiever? Does Study habits of students contribute in their academic Achievement. To find out the answer of these questions, Study Habit Inventory constructed by Palsane and Sharma was administered on the students of VIII standard and academic Achievement (percentage of total marks) of these students in class VII was considered as their academic achievement. The results revealed that the study habits of students were average but the relation between study habits and academic achievement was positive and significant. There was a significant difference in the study habits of students of govt. and private schools as well as between high and low achievers but no difference was found in the study habits of male and female and rural and urban students. The study habits were found to contribute significantly (11 percent) to academic achievement of the students.

Keywords: study habits, academic achievement

Introduction

Learning is a complex in nature. It is a result of many known and unknown factors. Advancement in science and technology has made imperative for every individual to be an efficient learner. Gone are the days when only a few hand written books were available and the students' success was consisted on rote-learning them. The vast expansion of knowledge has made it impossible to acquire even one hundredth part of the most essential knowledge in any specific field of interest. Appropriate methods of study are, therefore, needed to be practiced in order to acquire an insignificant even a small fraction of knowledge. Moreover, emphasis has now shifted from the quantity of knowledge to the right methods of acquiring it. "The teacher must concentrate on two things - quickening of interest and training in efficient techniques of learning and study"(Secondary education commission, 1952) ^[1].

Importance of Good Study Habits

Teachers are often heard complaining that their students are not achieving as much as they are capable of i.e. they are underachieving. Under achievement is a serious problem. This not only deprives the society of the potential contributions but also leads to maladjustment of the pupils. "Poor habits of study not only retard school progress but develop frustration, destroy initiative & confidence and make prominent the feeling of worthlessness towards himself and the subject of study whereas effective methods ensure success, happiness and sense of accomplishment" (Smith, Samuel and Field, L. 1948) ^[2]. Teachers often talk about the students who underscore despite of their hard work and even after burning mid-night oil, such students suffer from mental black-outs at the time of examination. This is because their efforts are not properly directed. It is not the amount of time devoted to study alone but also the method adopted for studying which make for better and greater learning. It has been found in several research that most of the students can save one fourth to one third of their time spent on study by systematizing their efforts in light of main principles of learning. One can get better results by putting less efforts if the focus is on efficiency. (Harrington, 1988)

Need for the Study

The importance of good study habits has already been established. The problem of Study Habits assumes an added importance in the context of our country and our students. In most European countries, courses on 'How to Study' are conducted to orient the students to better methods of learning. But in our country hardly any guidance is provided to the students on this vital question. Identifying good study habits is a matter of trial and error for most of our school children. Unfortunately, it is the failure on the part of schools and teachers to orient students about good study habits and provide them opportunity to develop skills of good study habits knowing the facts that studying is one of the important activities of students to learn throughout their life (Macne, 1948) ^[4]. Utter

neglect of this important question is to a large extent responsible for the mass failures in our schools. Among those who pass, the number of III divisioners predominate.

Thus, it is not only the quantity but also the quality of achievement that is adversely affected by the little attention being paid to cultivation of effective study habits among our children. It is, therefore, essential to know the study habits, our children have developed as a result of their own experience, to encourage them to practice the good ones, & to help them replace the bad ones by good ones. Habit is not something which is inborn and almost any habit can be changed by persistent effort. For any habit that tends towards low scholarship, there is an alternative habit that tends towards high scholarship. But more instructions on effective methods of study will not lead us far, it is insistence on their exercise for long periods of time that will bring about fruitful outcome. One cannot acquire habits and skills theoretically or in vacuum but by identifying proper habit of work and consistently working on them in every detail and over a long period of time that create right attitudes and values (Secondary Education Commission, 1952) ^[1]. A number of investigations have been conducted in India on the study habits of students.

But these studies are inspired by the work done in this area by the investigators in the Western Countries. Their perception of study habits has been, somehow, drawn upon by the Indian investigators and applied to Indian Children. Researches have rarely been conducted to identify the study habits which our students have in their own context. Culture and geographical conditions of a country or a particular place play an important role in determining the habit pattern of learners. In one country, studying at night may be a proper habit because of the climatic conditions of that country whereas in another country afternoon hours may be regarded as best for study. It is, as such, essential to know the study habits our students have developed as a result of variety of factors which determine cultural patterns of behaviour. Moreover, the Indian investigators have confined themselves to a general purpose of identifying the study habits of students of a particular grade or in a particular subject.

Attempt has rarely been made to identify the study habits which differentiate high achievers from low achievers in our schools. The knowledge of such habits would be a step further in the desired direction and could perhaps form the basis for working out programmes for developing proper study habits and skills. Many factors contribute to the academic achievement of a student with a varying degree. The extent to which study habits of a student's contribute to his academic performance is also an area to be studied further.

Objectives of the Study

1. to find out the study habits of students with respect to their sex, (male or female) category of school (government or private), and area of school (rural or urban),
2. to find out the relationship between study habits and academic achievement,
3. to compare the study habits of male and female students,
4. to compare the study habits of students studying in urban and rural schools,
5. to compare the study habits of students studying in government and private schools,
6. to compare the study habits of high and low achievers and,
7. to find out the contribution of study habits in the academic achievement of students.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant relationship between study habits and academic achievement of students.
2. There is no significant difference in the study habits of male and female students.
3. There is no significant difference in the study habits of students studying in urban and rural schools.
4. There is no significant difference in the study habits of students studying in government and private schools.
5. There is no significant difference in the study habits of high and low achievers
6. There is no significant contribution of study habits in the academic achievement of students.

Description of Sample

The sample comprised of five per cent randomly selected (18) schools from the total (350) schools of District West. In order to make sample more representative, at least two schools were selected from each category of schools. Students of one section of Class VIII from each of the 18 selected schools constituted the sample of 544 students (273 female and 271 male). Out of 544 selected students, 378 and 166 were studying in urban and rural schools respectively. Moreover, out of 544 selected students, 286 were studying in government schools and 258 in private schools.

Description of the Tool

Palsane & Sharma Study Habits inventory (PSSHI) was used to find out the study habits of students. The inventory covers eight dimensions namely (i) budgeting time (ii) physical condition, (iii) reading ability, (iv) note taking, (v) learning motivation, (vi) memory, (vii) taking examinations and (viii) health.

Statistics used for Analysis

The statistical techniques such as mean, standard deviation, coefficient of correlation, t-test, and multiple regression analysis were applied to achieve the objectives and test the hypotheses formulated.

Definitions of Important Terms**Study Habits**

It is defined as the pupil's way of studying whether systematic or unsystematic, efficient or inefficient. In the study, eight areas of study habits namely budgeting time, physical conditions for study, reading ability, note taking, learning motivation, memory, taking examinations and health were covered.

Academic achievement

It was defined as the percentage of marks of the students in the VII standard.

Government Schools

The schools run by the directorate of Education, GNCT, Delhi were considered as government schools.

Private Schools

The schools privately management but recognised by the Directorate of Education, GNCT, Delhi were considered as private schools.

Rural Schools

The schools which are located in rural areas and urban areas of Delhi were considered as rural and urban schools respectively.

High and Low Achievers

Out of total sample of students, top 25 percent in academic achievement (percentage of marks in class VII) were taken as high achievers and bottom 25 per cent as low achievers.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was confined to the schools which were running elementary classes in the District West of Delhi.
2. The study was confined to the students who had passed out class VII and were studying in Class VIII
3. The study was confined to the responses of students on the study habits inventory.
4. The responses of parents, other family members and teachers were not taken.

Findings of the Study

1. The students were found to have average study habits when the responses of all the students of all the sampled schools were taken into considerations.
2. There was a significant positive relationship between study habits and academic achievement of students.
3. There was no significant difference in the study habits of male and female students.
4. Though the students studying in rural area were found to have better study habits as compared to the students studying in urban area, but the difference was not significant.
5. There was a significant difference between the overall study habits of students studying in govt. and private schools. The students studying in private schools were found to have significantly better study habits as compared to the students studying in govt. schools.
6. The high achievers were found to have better study habits as compared to the low achievers and difference between the two was significant not only with respect to overall study habits but its seven out of eight dimensions namely, budgeting time, physical conditions, reading ability, learning motivations, health, taking examinations and memory. It was not significant for only one dimension namely, note taking.
7. The study habits were found to contribute significantly (11 percent) to academic achievement of the students. The dimensions namely budgeting time, learning motivation and taking examinations were found to contribute significantly in the academic achievement of the students.

Conclusion of the Study

Since, the students were found to have average study habits, there is scope for improvement in their study habits. The schools and family by their concentrated efforts together may bring improvement in the study habits of the students. Sex of the students does not make any difference in their study habits. The area (rural and urban) in which students study does not makes the difference in their study habits. There is a positive relationship between study habits and academic achievement, and high achievers have better study habits as compared to low achievers. Study habits (budgeting time, learning motivation and taking examinations) contribute to academic achievement of students.

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