

## **Diversity in Study Habits of Formal and Non Formal Students: A Case of F.G Education College and Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad**

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### **Abstract**

This study aimed to determine and compare study habits of formal and non-formal students at post graduate level. The study was conducted in Federal Government Education College Islamabad and four regions of Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad. The study employed cluster sampling technique selecting all the 100 students of F.G Education College and 400 students of AIOU Islamabad from the four regions selecting two study centers from each region. Data were collected by administering Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ) developed by Gordon (2005) directly to students. The data were analyzed by using independent sample t-test statistical technique to compare the mean score of formal and non-formal students. The findings revealed that formal students plan their study time schedule and follow it strictly than non-formal students. Formal students prepare themselves for examinations properly by starting review for major exam well in time, attending extra classes and gaining teachers' help more than non-formal students. Study findings also depicted that formal students are more capable to take and review notes of each class and more proficient to put notes from the text into their own words as compared to non-formal students. As regards to reading and writing skills no significant difference was found between formal and non-formal students.

**Keywords:** exams preparation, reading skill, time management, writing skill.

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## Introduction

The study habits in students' life play an important role in their academic achievement. Study habits inform an individual that how much he/she will learn and how much he/she wants to earn and how long he desires to go. Study habits of an individual's help to determine all of these throughout the life. Students should apply different techniques for studying because with these techniques they can make sure for good outcomes. All students have different study habits. Some students wish for calm environment for study while others can study in crowdie places. According to Sadia (2005) study in a peaceful and calm environment is better but some time students cannot be able to get that environment. Student should adjust themselves according environment for example in hostels some students study in quiet place but some do not. Students can feel comfortable and adjust easily in the hostel with having good study habits. Some students do not have the ability to adjust in non-suitable environment. Because of this reason, these students lose their positions. Effective study habits make easier for students to achieve better results.

Study habit is described as the commitment of time and attention to get knowledge and information particularly from books or it's the quest of academic knowledge by in depth study of a situation or subject (Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus of English Language, 2003). The study habits are of more helpful to realize the abilities of the students. Study habit is a desire of a student to learn in an efficient and systematic way when opportunity is provided (Naeemullah 2011). Riaz, Kiran and Malik (2002) stated that components of study habits consist of taking class notes, following a schedule of work and writing back the class room material. They found significant and positive relationship between achievements and factors of study habits like schedule of study, habit of notes taking and writing back. Ansari (2007) exhibited that study habits and study behavior are important variables which decide the academic performance of the students. Robinson (2000) revealed that good study habits bring about high academic performance while some bad study habits bring out poor academic performance.

Proper investment of time in students' life is much 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 is engaged (Nausheen, 2002). Nonis & Hudson (2010) have elaborated the study habits as strategies that students use to learn such as paying attention in their classes, being on time in classes, preparing good notes during lecturers, completing homework in a timely manner, and reading the study material before a lecture have impact their academic performance. Study habit is a method

which helps the students to get proper input and to quench their thirst for knowledge.

Study habits and study skills are particularly important techniques for students who use these study habits techniques such as time management, note taking, internet surfing skill, to get rid of distractions and assigning high priority to study (Ainley & Patrick, 2006). Simmons, Kameenui, Stoolmiller, Coyne and Harn (2003) found that efficient study habits make strong impact on writing. He recommended teachers in the universities should make effort to furnish graduates with ability to learn autonomously, the ability for critical reasoning, conceptual grasp, self-reflection, exercise flexibility of mind and high level of analytical skills. Crede & Kuncel (2008) state that good study skills and study habits help the students with high cognitive ability to show better performance than students with low or medium cognitive ability levels. The findings of Miller & Brickman (2004) reveal that successful students always show a commitment to maximize their learning from educational experiences by monitoring their progress and making adjustments in their efforts when necessary to accomplish the desired goals.

Different aspects of study habits such as homework and assignments, time allocation, reading and note taking, study period procedures, concentration, written work, examination and relationship of teachers with students have impact on students' academic achievement (Oluwatimilehin & Owoyele, 2012). Note taking is useful technique for students in both academic and professional settings. Recent researchers found that providing student with guided notes facilitates them to better perform in (Marsh & Sink 2010) exams and can help students more accurately record key points and examples (Rayver & Maydosz 2010). Ugwulashi (2013) believed that time management is one of the essential instrument for educational improvement for students. He stressed that by encouraging student to properly utilize their time enables them to prepare for exam and get success without any fear or risk. Basic reading skill is the ability to read the components of printed text, word, letters and continuous text correctly, accurately and proficiently.

In the modern era, the two modes of education i. e formal and non-formal, are being practiced. Both modes are facilitating students and in this study effort has been made to determine and compare study habits of formal and non-formal students at post graduate level.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study were to:

1. To determine different study habits of formal and non-formal students at post graduate level.
2. To compare study habits of formal and non-formal students.

### **Hypothesis**

Following six null hypothesis corresponding to objectives of the study were postulated:

- H01: There is no significant difference between 'time management' of formal and non-formal students.
- H02: There is no significant difference between 'study environment' of formal and non-formal students.
- H03: There is no significant difference between 'exams preparation' of formal and non-formal students.
- H04: There is no significant difference between 'note taking' of formal and non-formal students.
- H05: There is no significant difference between 'reading skill' of formal and non-formal students.
- H06: There is no significant difference between 'writing skill' of formal and non-formal students.

### **Methodology**

The study aimed to determine and compare the study habits of formal and non-formal students of postgraduate level. The study was conducted in FG College of Education Islamabad and four regions of Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad i.e. Islamabad Region, Rawalpindi Region, Mirpur Region and Mandi Bahauddin Region to collect data from the formal and non-formal students of postgraduate level respectively.

### **Population**

The population for this study was:

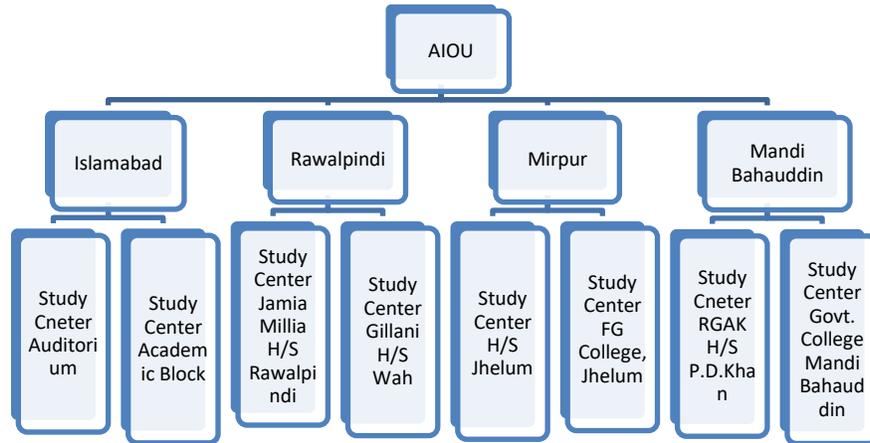
1. All the 17640 enrolled students of M.Ed at AIOU, Islamabad in Semester Autumn 2014. (Non-formal students)
2. All the 100 enrolled students of M.Ed in FG College of Education, Islamabad for the session 2014-15. (Formal Students)

### **Sample**

This study was conducted using cluster sampling technique which ensures that respondent group rather than individual have been selected. Sample size of both types of respondent was determined under the guide line of Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011) that sample of 400 is enough for population more than 5000 and for the smaller population i.e. less than hundred whole population will be included in the sample. So, all the 100 formal students of FG College of Education, Islamabad were included in sample considering it as a cluster. Non formal and 400 non formal students were included in the sample.

The sample of 400 non formal students from four regions of Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad was selected using two stage cluster

random sampling technique which selected cluster sampling with individual random sampling. By adapting two stage random sampling technique eight clusters (study centers) two from each region including 50 randomly selected students were included in sample to collect data from the respondent. The sample selection procedure is further elaborated in following diagram.



### Instrument

Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ) developed by Gordon (2005) was used to measure students study habits. Permission was obtained from the concerned authority of the instrument to administer this instrument. Study Habit Questionnaire consists of 36 items, which measure six study habits of the students i.e. (a) Time Management, (b) Study Environment (c) Note Taking, (d) Exam Preparation, (e) Reading Skill, and (f) Writing Skill. This instrument was developed on five point Likert scale indicating: Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Often = 4 and Always = 5. The Cronbach alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value for SHQ was 0.712 which was also acceptable.

### Data Collection Procedure

Questionnaires were distributed personally among sampled M.Ed students of AIOU and FG College of Education, Islamabad. Response rate from AIOU was 100%. While out of 100 M.Ed students of FG College, 83 students returned the questionnaires. Response rate of FG College M.Ed students was 83%.

### Data Analysis

Data collected from the participants were analyzed to compare the study habits i.e. ‘time management’, ‘study environment’, ‘exams preparation’, ‘note taking’, ‘reading skill’ and ‘writing skill’ of formal and non-formal students. Independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean score of each study habit of both categories of (Formal/non Formal) students.

Table 2

*Comparison of Study Environment of Formal and Non Formal Students (N=471: 83 Formal + 388Non Formal)*

Study Habit	Teaching Mode	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
Study Environment	Formal	83	3.317	0.602	469	1.815	0.065
	Non Formal	388	3.180	0.616			

Table 2 presents the comparison of formal and non formal Students’ study habit related to ‘study environment’ by conducting independent sample t-test and depicts that hypothesis H02 was accepted as there is no significant difference between the mean scores of study environment of formal and non formal students, as  $\rho = 0.065$  ( $\rho > 0.05$ ), for formal students ( $M = 3.317$ ,  $SD = 0.602$ ) and for non formal students ( $M = 3.180$ ,  $SD = 0.616$ );  $t(469) = 1.815$ . It is evident that formal and non formal students have same level of study environment.

Table 3

*Comparison of Exams Preparation of Formal and Non Formal Students (N=471:83 Formal + 388Non Formal)*

Study Habit	Teaching Mode	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	p
Exams Preparation	Formal	83	3.429	0.672	469	2.966	*0.004
	Non Formal	388	3.195	0.550			

Table 3 presents the comparison of formal and non formal Students’ study habit related to ‘exams preparation’ by conducting independent sample t-test and depicts that hypothesis H03 was accepted as there is significant difference between the mean scores of exam preparation of formal and non formal students, as  $\rho = 0.004$  ( $\rho < 0.05$ ), for formal students ( $M = 3.429$ ,  $SD = 0.672$ ) and for non formal students ( $M = 3.195$ ,  $SD = 0.550$ );  $t(469) = 2.966$ . It is evident that formal students’ mean score is better in exams preparation than non formal students. It showed that formal students have better vision of their

exams preparation than non formal students. The magnitude of difference in the means by calculating effect size is small (Eta squared = 0.002).

Table 4

*Comparison of Note Taking of Formal and Non Formal Students  
(N=471: 83 Formal + 388 Non Formal)*

Study Habit	Teaching Mode	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	p
Note Taking	Formal	83	3.550	0.637	469	5.865	*0.000
	Non Formal	388	3.108	0.548			

Table 4 presents the comparison of formal and non formal Students' study habit related to 'note taking' by conducting independent sample t-test and depicts that hypothesis H04 rejected as there is significant difference between the mean scores of note taking of formal and non formal students, as  $\rho = 0.000$  ( $\rho < 0.05$ ), for formal students ( $M = 3.550$ ,  $SD = 0.637$ ) and for non formal students ( $M = 3.108$ ,  $SD = 0.548$ );  $t(469) = 5.865$ . It is evident that formal students' mean score is better in note taking than non formal students. It portrayed that formal students are found more proficient in note taking than non formal students. The magnitude of difference in the means by calculating effect size is small (Eta squared = 0.002).

Table 5

*Comparison of Reading Skill of Formal and Non Formal Students  
(N=471:83 Formal + 388 Non Formal)*

Study Habit	Teaching Mode	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	p
Reading Skill	Formal	83	3.497	0.577	469	0.313	0.754
	Non Formal	388	3.473	0.653			

Table 5 presents the comparison of formal and non formal Students' study habit related to 'reading skills' by conducting independent sample t-test and depicts that hypothesis H05 was accepted as there is no significant difference between the mean scores of reading skill of formal and non formal students, as  $\rho = 0.754$  ( $\rho > 0.05$ ), for formal students ( $M = 3.497$ ,  $SD = 0.577$ ) and for non formal students ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = 0.653$ );  $t(471) = 0.313$ . It is evident that formal and non formal students have same level of reading skill.

Table 6

*Comparison of Writing Skill of Formal and Non Formal Students  
(N=471:83 Formal + 388 Non Formal)*

Study Habit	Teaching Mode	N	Mean	SD	df	T	p
Writing Skill	Formal	83	3.708	0.577	469	1.583	0.114
	Non Formal	388	3.586	0.653			

Table 6 presents the comparison of formal and non formal Students' study habit related to 'writing skills' by conducting independent sample t-test and depicts that hypothesis H06 was accepted as there is no significant difference between the mean scores of writing skill of formal and non formal students, as  $p = 0.114$  ( $p > 0.05$ ), for formal students ( $M = 3.708$ ,  $SD = 0.679$ ) and for non formal students ( $M = 3.586$ ,  $SD = 0.628$ );  $t(469) = 1.583$ . It is evident that formal and non formal students have same level of writing skill.

### **Discussion on Major Findings**

The study findings revealed that formal students plan their study time schedule and follow it better than non formal students. Whereas, non formal student do not follow properly time schedule than formal students. Formal students attend regular classes and prepare their assignments well in time as compared to non formal students. In case of study environment no difference was found between both categories of students. Both formal and non formal students study in same level of environment with respect to noise, distraction and comfort. Formal students prepare themselves for examinations most properly than non formal students. Formal students starts reviewing for major exam well in time, attend extra classes and gain teachers' help; whereas non formal students found weak in reviewing course and gaining teachers' help through extra classes. Study findings also depicted that formal students are more efficient in note taking as compared to non formal students. Formal students found more capable to take and review notes of each class than non formal students. Formal students also found more proficient to put notes from the text into their own words as compared to non formal students. As regards to reading and writing skills no significant difference was found between formal and non formal students. Both categories of students have same level of concentration and understanding of reading material without re-reading. Both types of students have same level of caliber to communicate effectively in writing. Their library and internet using ability to complete their assigned task is also of same level.

### **Recommendations/Implications of the Study**

Non formal students should be encouraged to enhance their time management skill. A mechanism should be developed to engage them in study according to planed schedule. So that they can prepare and submit their assignments well in time. They should be aware how to prepare for examination by reviewing the course before major examination. They should be provided teachers' help through extra classes to improve their academic deficiency. Non formal students should also be guided to improve their note taking capability and putting notes from the text into their own writing.

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