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Research Paper

A Correlational Study of Study Habits and Academic Stress among 8th Standard Students of SVJCT English Medium School, Kasarwadi

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ABSTRACT

The present correlational study aims to examine the relationship between study habits and academic stress among 8th standard students of SVJCT English Medium School, Kasarwadi. In the face of increasing academic demands and heightened performance expectations, students often experience elevated stress levels. Simultaneously, the role of structured study habits in managing academic challenges is becoming increasingly recognized. A sample of 50 students was selected using purposive sampling, and data were collected using standardized tools—the Study Habit Inventory and the Student Stress Scale. Results revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between study habits and academic stress ($r = -0.875$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that students with effective study habits experience lower levels of academic stress. These findings underscore the importance of promoting adaptive study behaviors as a preventive measure to reduce academic stress and enhance student well-being. The study advocates for educational interventions and school-based programs aimed at developing effective study strategies among adolescents.

Keywords: *Study Habits, Academic Stress, Adolescence, School Students, Correlational Study, Psychological Well-Being*

Study habits are the regular practices, routines, and approaches that students use to learn effectively. They represent the methods by which students plan, organize, and carry out their study-related tasks. These habits form the foundation of a student's learning process and have a direct impact on academic performance, motivation, and overall educational outcomes (Crede & Kuncel, 2008).

Study habits are shaped over time and are influenced by various internal and external factors such as self-discipline, environment, parental involvement, teacher guidance, and peer influence (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002). While some students naturally develop structured and effective habits, others may require support and awareness to build them.
Good study habits refer to positive and productive practices that enhance a student's ability to focus, understand, and retain information. These include:

- **Time Management**: Allocating specific time blocks for study and adhering to a consistent daily routine.

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- **Goal Setting**: Establishing short-term and long-term academic goals to maintain focus and motivation.
- **Active Learning**: Engaging with the material by taking notes, asking questions, and summarizing what has been learned.
- **Concentration and Focus**: Choosing a quiet, distraction-free environment for studying and maintaining attention during study sessions.
- **Regular Revision**: Reviewing previously learned content at regular intervals to reinforce memory and understanding.
- **Organized Workspace**: Keeping study materials, books, and notes well-organized to avoid wasting time and reduce stress.
- **Healthy Study Techniques**: Using methods such as reading aloud, making mind maps, highlighting key points, and practicing with sample questions (Mendezabal, 2013).

While good study habits enhance learning and academic performance, bad study habits can hinder a student's ability to study effectively and can lead to poor academic outcomes. These habits often develop unintentionally and become part of a student's routine, making it difficult to recognize their negative impact (Awang & Sinnadurai, 2011).

Poor study habits include:

- Procrastination
- Irregular Study Schedule
- Cramming
- Lack of Focus
- Passive Learning
- Disorganized Workspace
- Skipping Revisions
- Studying in Bed or Noisy Environments
- Overdependence on Others

These habits, if not identified and corrected early, can become barriers to effective learning. They often result in poor academic performance, low self-esteem, anxiety, and frustration. Moreover, bad study habits can create a cycle of underachievement, where the student loses interest in studies and struggles to catch up (Gettinger & Seibert, 2002).

Practicing such habits helps students learn more efficiently, reduces last-minute pressure, and builds confidence in their academic abilities. Students with good study habits are more likely to perform well in tests, complete assignments on time, and cope better with academic challenges.

Developing good study habits is especially important during the school years, as these habits not only impact immediate academic results but also shape future learning behaviors. With proper guidance, encouragement, and consistency, students can learn to adopt and maintain effective study routines that support long-term academic and personal success (Crede & Kuncel, 2008).

Student stress is a growing concern in the educational field, particularly among adolescents navigating both academic and personal transitions. Stress in students is typically defined as a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from demanding academic or social

circumstances (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). While a moderate level of stress can serve as motivation, excessive or chronic stress can negatively affect a student's mental health, learning capacity, and overall well-being.

For school-aged children, especially those in middle school such as 8th standard, stress may arise from multiple sources. These include academic pressure, such as high expectations from parents and teachers, competitive school environments, frequent testing, and heavy homework loads. At the same time, students at this age are undergoing cognitive, emotional, and social development, making them more sensitive to performance feedback, peer approval, and self-image (Deb et al., 2015). The struggle to balance academic demands with co-curricular activities, social relationships, and personal interests often leads to emotional exhaustion.

In today's educational landscape, stress has also been linked with broader systemic issues such as rigid curriculums, lack of individualized learning, and inadequate mental health support in schools. With increasing emphasis on grades, rankings, and achievements, many students internalize the belief that their worth is directly tied to their academic success. This creates a performance-oriented mindset where fear of failure, perfectionism, and anxiety become persistent issues.

The effects of student stress are multi-dimensional. Psychologically, stress can cause anxiety, irritability, low self-confidence, and in severe cases, depression. Behaviorally, it may lead to procrastination, lack of motivation, changes in eating or sleeping habits, and withdrawal from studies or social interaction. Physiologically, stress can result in fatigue, headaches, weakened immune responses, and other psychosomatic symptoms (Sinha et al., 2000). Over time, unmanaged stress not only impairs academic achievement but also undermines emotional resilience and personal development.

Moreover, in the age of digital learning and information overload, students are often bombarded with constant comparisons through social media, adding an additional layer of psychosocial stress. The pandemic has further exacerbated academic stress in recent years, as many students had to adapt to remote learning, isolation, and uncertainty about their academic futures.

Therefore, identifying stressors and promoting effective coping strategies is critical. Schools must recognize the importance of emotional well-being alongside academic performance, and integrate stress management programs, counseling services, and teacher sensitivity training into their systems. Equipping students with tools such as time management, relaxation techniques, and open communication channels can help build resilience and adaptability.

Understanding and addressing academic stress is essential for developing well-rounded students who are not only high achievers but also emotionally healthy individuals. For researchers, educators, and policymakers alike, exploring the patterns and consequences of student stress opens avenues for creating a more humane, supportive, and balanced educational environment.

Need and significance of the study

Academic success during school years is closely linked to students' study habits and their ability to manage academic stress. At the 8th standard level, students begin facing more complex academic tasks and greater expectations, making it essential to understand how their study behaviors impact stress levels. Poor study habits—such as lack of time management or irregular study patterns—can increase academic stress, while effective habits can improve performance and reduce anxiety. This study is significant as it explores the relationship between study habits and academic stress among school students, an area of growing concern for educators and parents. Understanding this link can help in designing practical interventions and school programs to promote healthy study behaviors and reduce stress. The findings will also contribute to educational psychology research and support student well-being in school settings.

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the problem

The present study aims to investigate the relationship between study habits and academic stress among 8th standard students of SVJCT English Medium School, Kasarwadi.

Objective

1. To examine the relationship between study habits and academic stress.

Hypotheses

1. There will be a significant negative correlation between study habits and academic stress.

Sample

The sample of the present study consisted of 50 students studying in the 8th standard at SVJCT English Medium School, Kasarwadi. The sample included both male and female students selected using a convenient sampling method. All participants were regular school-going children in the age range of approximately 13 to 14 years. The students were selected based on their availability and willingness to participate in the study.

Tools

The following psychological tools will be used for data collection.

- **The Study Habit Inventory (SHI)** developed by M.N. Palsane (1971) is a standardized self-report tool designed to assess the study habits of students in areas such as time management, concentration, reading, motivation, and test preparation. It includes 45 items, scored on a 3-point Likert scale with responses marked as Always, Sometimes, and Rarely. Positively worded items are scored as 2, 1, 0, and negatively worded items are reverse scored. The total score ranges from 0 to 90, where higher scores reflect better study habits. The tool has demonstrated high reliability (split-half reliability = 0.88) and strong content and construct validity. Interpretation of scores is as follows: above 74 – Excellent, 64–74 – Good, 53–63 – Average, 42–52 – Unsatisfactory, and below 42 – Very Unsatisfactory.
- **The Student Stress Scale**, developed by Dr. Zaki Akhter (2011), is a standardized self-report instrument designed to assess academic stress among students. It comprises 51 items addressing areas such as academic workload, time pressure, parental and peer expectations, and emotional distress. The scale uses a 5-point Likert format, ranging from Always to Never, to measure how frequently students experience stress-related situations. Scores range from 51 to 255, with higher scores

indicating greater stress levels—255 representing very high stress, and 55 indicating very low stress. The tool has strong psychometric properties, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability of 0.78 (significant at the 0.01 level) and a construct validity coefficient of 0.72. It is widely used in educational research and student mental health assessments (Akhter, 2011).

Procedure of data collection

The data for the present study was collected from 8th standard students of SVJCT English Medium School, Kasarwadi. Prior to data collection, formal permission was obtained from the school Principal. The objectives and purpose of the study were explained, and approval was granted to conduct the research during school hours. Informed consent was also obtained from the students, and they were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

The standardized tools Study Habit Inventory by M.N. Palsane (1971) and Student Stress Scale by Dr. Zaki Akhter (2011**)** were administered in a classroom setting. Clear instructions were provided, and any doubts were addressed by the researcher. Students responded to the questionnaires individually and were given sufficient time to complete them without pressure. Once completed, the responses were collected, verified for completeness, and then scored according to the guidelines provided in the respective manuals for statistical analysis.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria:

- Students studying in the 8th standard **at** SVJCT English Medium School, Kasarwadi**.**
- Students who were present on the day of data collection**.**
- Students who voluntarily agreed to participate and provided informed consent.
- Students capable of understanding and responding to the questionnaire items in English.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Students from other classes or standards**.**
- Students who were absent during the data collection period.
- Students who refused to participate or withdrew consent**.**
- Students with diagnosed learning disabilities or any cognitive impairments that may interfere with understanding or responding to the questionnaires.

DISCUSSION

The present study investigated the relationship between study habits and academic stress among 8th standard students at SVJCT English Medium School, Kasarwadi. The hypothesis posited a significant negative correlation between study habit and student stress, which was statistically supported ($r = -0.875$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that students who engage in positive study practices are less likely to experience high levels of academic stress.

These findings resonate with the theoretical framework proposed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which highlights the role of coping strategies in stress appraisal. In this context, good study habits may serve as problem-focused coping mechanisms, enabling students to manage academic demands more efficiently, thus reducing the subjective experience of stress.

The result aligns with existing literature from both Indian and international studies. Crede and Kuncel (2008) emphasized that effective study habits correlate strongly with improved academic performance and reduced psychological distress. Likewise, Gettinger and Seibert (2002) identified structured study routines as protective factors that foster academic competence and resilience. By reinforcing these perspectives, the current study highlights the adaptive function of effective study behaviors as stress-regulating tools.

In practical terms, students with good study habits exhibit behaviors such as setting academic goals, organizing their time, actively engaging with study material, and preparing systematically for assessments. These behaviors likely contribute to a sense of academic self-efficacy, which reduces feelings of helplessness commonly associated with academic stress. In contrast, students lacking such habits may encounter last-minute pressure, unpreparedness, and lower academic confidence, all of which exacerbate stress levels.

Additionally, the findings have implications for school-based interventions. Rather than relying solely on emotional coping strategies, educators and counselors should incorporate skill-based approaches into student development programs. Workshops on time management, planning, and active learning strategies could be embedded into regular school activities, not only to improve academic outcomes but also to promote emotional well-being. From a socio-cultural perspective, the findings are particularly relevant in the Indian educational context, where academic pressure and competition are intensified by societal expectations. Parental and institutional emphasis on performance often magnifies stress. Therefore, empowering students with actionable strategies—like those embedded in good study habits could provide a sustainable and culturally sensitive pathway to both academic and emotional success.

It is also critical to interpret these findings with an awareness of limitations. The cross-sectional nature of the study precludes causal conclusions. Although a strong correlation was found, it cannot confirm whether poor study habits lead to high stress or vice versa. Longitudinal studies are needed to explore this dynamic further. Additionally, self-reported measures may carry bias due to social desirability or students' subjective interpretation of items.

In conclusion, the study affirms that study habits are more than academic tools—they are psychological assets that buffer stress. By cultivating these habits early in a student's academic life, schools can play a transformative role in not only enhancing academic performance but also in nurturing emotional resilience.

Delimitations of the study

- The study was limited to 8th standard students of SVJCT English Medium School, Kasarwadi only, and the findings may not be generalized to students of other grades or schools.
- Only two standardized tools—the Study Habit Inventory by M.N. Palsane and the Student Stress Scale by Dr. Zaki Akhter—were used to measure study habits and academic stress.
- The study was conducted within a specific time frame during regular school hours, which may have influenced the students' stress levels or responses.
- Data was collected from a single school, which may reflect local academic and environmental factors rather than broader regional or national trends.

- The responses were self-reported**,** which may involve subjectivity or social desirability bias.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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