
A Comparative Study of Government and Private School Students on Their Critical Thinking and Study Habits

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ABSTRACT

The authors have attempted to understand whether Government and Private school students of Mysore are differ on Critical Thinking and Study Habits. The study was conducted on the sample of 625 students of Mysore City in India using stratified random sampling technique. Results indicated that Government and Private school students differ on their critical thinking and study habits. Those students who were on Private schools had better critical thinking ability and study habits in favour of Government school students. It means, the critical thinking abilities and Study Habits of private school students are better than government school students. It is being discussed that private institutions enjoy certain advantages against government institutions.

Keywords: *Government School, Private School, Students, Critical Thinking, Study Habits*

Education is an activity of enabling learners to develop themselves into full fledged individuals. In this direction, educational planners and administrators work towards all round development of the intellectual abilities and personality of the individual learners. Ideally, enabling an individual to actualize their potentialities is the ultimate purpose of educational systems. Coughlin and Castilla (2014) conducted a study to assess the effect of private high school education on the college trajectory. In the economics literature, the effect of attending a private high school is still a debatable topic. Based on the some findings, they suggested that attending a Catholic high school (which comprises most of the private sector in the United States) substantially raises the probability of high school graduation and/or college attendance. Contrastingly, other studies indicated the effect of Catholic schooling on test scores is driven only by minority students. Inferences about the impact of private schools on educational attainment are difficult because of potential non-random selection. Families of students in private schools choose to pay when a free public alternative is available. These differences can confound the effect of attending a private high school with student (and/or family) attributes. Previous research on the effect of private

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high school enrollment on educational attainment has used a variety of instruments to address non-random selection.

Educational researchers, educationists and psychologists, have attempted to identify major factors that affect the quality of education. There are different factors which influence educational processes and products and of them critical thinking and study habits also find a prominent place. Perry (1988) investigated the effectiveness of private and public schools. Sample of the study was fifteen-year-old high school students, and they offered an interpretation of the differences between her/him private and public school's experiences. Perry provided rich examples to support her main argument that, in her experience, public schools deny students their identity as intellectual beings, and repress the intellectual development of minority students in particular. Private schools, on the other hand, have better performance but they are culturally isolating for minority students.

In the process of providing education the state and the central governments are taking enough initiatives. Shepherd (1998) examined how the implementation of a curriculum intervention impact critical thinking skills of fourth and fifth grade students in a private school for gifted students in a Midwestern state. Two groups of fourth and fifth grade students participated in this study. The experimental group (N = 20) used the Probe Method while the control group (N = 15) did not use the Probe Method. The experimental group of fourth/fifth graders, after participating in the nine-week project, showed a significantly greater increase in critical thinking skills in comparison to the control group of similar subjects. Findings from this study provide the evidence that the Probe Method can be an effective method for improving critical thinking.

Kansal, Baliga, Mallapur, and Katti (2015) assessed the school services in government and private schools of Belgaum. Results indicated private schools provided better services in comparison with government schools.

Private schools get paid well. In terms of the functioning, private school system appears to function better and this is the view of the public. Elias and Kress (1994) discussed the relationship between critical thinking skills and academic achievement. Findings indicated in **Private Schools** Facilitate students' critical thinking and the middle school years are the time of increasing critical thinking skills as well, students' academic achievement. Finally, empirical evidence supporting use of critical thinking instruction is related to academic achievement.

Coughlin and Castilla (2014) estimated the effect of private secondary schooling on the average college trajectory of a student in the United States, examining college enrollment and degree attainment across the private and public sectors. Results indicated that private schooling has a significant and positive effect on college enrollment and degree attainment.

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Olatoye (2009) compared study habit and science achievement of students in public and private junior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. Twelve secondary schools were randomly selected from Egba and Ijebu divisions of the state. A sample of three hundred and sixty (360) students participated in the study. There was no significant difference in study habit of students in public and private schools. However, private school students performed significantly better than their public school counterparts in science achievement.

Fostering critical thinking will enhance academic achievement and can be considered into two main approaches: (1) training courses based on special design and (2) teaching of the set of learning materials by embedding defined skills (Haghparsat, Nasaruddin, & Abdullah, 2014).

In the academic field, study habits are of particular theoretical and practical importance (Nagaraju, 2004). Crede and Kuncel (2008) based on meta-analysis study suggested that to establish effective studying, student needs to equip himself by knowledge of appropriate studying techniques and practices (study skills), with intentional and undergoing effort (study motivation), self-regulation, ability to concentrate, self-monitoring (study habits), and initiate sense of value in one's own learning (study attitude).

Soares, Guisande, Almeida, and Paramo (2009) clarified that if educational systems aim to increase academic success in higher education institutions, must focus on some kind of interventions directed towards learning strategies, study skills, and study habits.

Light and Alexakos (1970) suggested counseling on improvement of students' study habits will affect students' grades in English.

“College students with high levels of overall academic achievement tend to have more effective study habits than do low-achieving students with respect to study techniques, time management and attitudes towards learning” (Bailey & Ouwuegbuzie 2002).

According to Ch (2006) study habits are determinants of academic performance. Good study habits may determine in systematic and efficient way, it also, has positive effect on academic achievement.

Rani (2013) conducted a study on 100 secondary school science students to find out the relationship between study habits and home environment of the science students studying in secondary school of Haryana. The results of the study revealed the significantly positive relationship of home environment components of rejection with study habits. The study also found that there was no significant difference of home environment between boys and girls studying in science stream of senior secondary school.

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Rajakumar and Soundararajan (2012) have aimed to find out the study habit of higher secondary students in Tirunelveli District. The sample was 1060 higher secondary students. The mean value of Study habit scores 142.12 (63.16%) indicates that the higher secondary students are having good study habit. There is no significant difference between male and female, rural and urban higher secondary students with respect to their Study habit. There is significant difference between day scholar and hostel staying, government and aided higher secondary school students with respect to their study habit.

Research Questions

The researchers have raised the following research questions in the study.

1. Do Government and Private School Students differ in their Critical Thinking?
2. Do Government and Private School Students differ in their Study Habits?

In order to answer the above research questions, the following objectives have been developed.

Objectives

- To study whether the Government and Private School Students differ in their Critical Thinking.
- To study whether the Government and Private School Students differ in their Study Habits.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested.

Hypotheses

- H1) There is no significant difference between the students of Government and Private schools on their Critical Thinking.
- H2) There is no significant difference between the students of Government and Private schools on their Study Habits.

METHOD

The descriptive survey method was used in the study. The population of the study comprised Secondary and Senior Secondary school students of Mysore City, who are studying in English Medium, in Government and Private High Schools and Pre University Colleges during academic year of 2015-2016. The sample of the study has been drawn by using stratified random sampling method. The final sample of this study comprised 625 students studying in English Medium institutions, covering Government and Private High Schools and Pre University Colleges during the academic year 2015-16. Further, the students who have enrolled in classes 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th were selected for this study who are approximately of 14 to 18 years of age. The sampling frame developed is as follows which is based on the target student population.

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Mysore City (9th, 10th 11th and 12th Standards) 625 Students			
Secondary 375			Senior Secondary 250
Government Schools 50	Private Schools 325		Government Schools 100 Private Schools 150

In the study, Mysore Critical Thinking Scale (MCTS) constructed by C. G. Venkatesha Murthy (2014) and Study Habits and Attitudes scale developed by C.P. Mathur, (2002) were used to assess Students' study habits.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In order to test the first hypothesis chi square test was used to compare the performance of the students of Government and Private schools who are on different levels of critical thinking. In order to test the first hypothesis, *Chi-Square Test* was used to compare the compare Government and Private school students who are on different levels of critical thinking.

H1) There is no significant difference between the students of Government and Private schools on their Critical Thinking Levels.

In order to test the above hypothesis, the Government school students and Private school students with different levels of Critical Thinking Levels were identified and tabulated, which yielded the following

Table 1, Government and Private school students on different levels of Critical Thinking

Critical Thinking Levels	Government School Students	Private School Students	Total
Poor	111 (74%)	212 (44.63%)	323 (51.68%)
Average	20 (13.33%)	90 (18.94%)	110 (17.60%)
High	19 (12.66%)	173 (36.42%)	192 (30.72%)
Total	150 (100%)	475 (100%)	625 (100%)

An analysis of the Table 1 indicates that out of the 625 students, around half of the total sample are poor on critical thinking (51.68%), 17.60% are average critical thinkers and around 30.72% are high critical thinkers. It also indicates a big portion of government school students (74%) are poor on critical thinking ability. Since, the total number of students of government and private

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school students are different, in order to compare them, each of the three levels of learners were converted in to percentages. A comparison of government and private school students on their critical thinking levels indicates that a larger percentage of government school students are poor on critical thinking. It means apparently, government school students are poor in favor of private school students on their critical thinking. In order to verify it statistically, it was subjected to Chi square, which yielded the following.

Table 2, Chi-Square Test results of comparison of Government and Private School Students on three levels of critical thinking

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	42.007	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	625		

An analysis of the Table 2 indicates that the obtained $\chi^2 = 42.007$, $p = .000$, which indicates that the obtained chi square is significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. It means that there is a significant difference between the students of Government and Private schools who are on different levels of Critical Thinking in favour of private school students. It means, the critical thinking abilities of private school students are better than government school students.

The second hypothesis of the study is as follows.

H2) There is no significant difference between the students of Government and Private schools on their Study Habits.

In order to test the above hypothesis, the Government school students and Private school students with different Study Habits were identified and tabulated, which yielded the following.

Table 3, Descriptive statistics of Study Habits Scores among Government and Private School Students

	N	Mean	SEM	Median	Mode	SD
Government Schools	150 (24%)	35.8	.550	35.50	30	6.734
Private Schools	475 (76%)	36.57	.309	37	36	6.742
Total	625 (100%)	36.21	.271	37	41	6.760

An analysis of Table 3 indicates that the mean score of government school students is 35.80, while the mean scores of private school students is 36.57. It means, private school students are relatively better than government school students on their study habits. The mode of private school students is 36, while that of government school students is 30, which is lesser than the

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private schools. In terms of the standard deviation of both the private and government schools, they are more or less the same.

In order to compare the significance of the difference between the mean scores of the government and private schools, the data were subjected to t test which yielded the following.

Table 4, Significance of the difference between the mean scores on Study Habits of Government and private School Students

	N	Mean	SD	SE	df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Government School Students	150	35.08	6.734	.550	623	2.358	.01
Private School Students	475	36.57	6.742	.309			
Total	625	36.21	6.765	.271			

An analysis of the Table 4 shows that the $t(623) = -2.358, p = .01$, which indicates that the government and private school students differ statistically significantly at .01 level on their study habits scores. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Since the mean scores of private school students are greater than the government school students, it indicates that government school students and private school students differ significantly in favour of the private school students. It means the study habits of private school students are statistically significantly better than the government school students. The present finding adds to the previous finding on critical thinking levels by way of strengthening the issue that the private school students are not only significantly higher on critical thinking but they are also significantly higher on study habits also. So the better performance of private school students is because of both these factors of better critical thinking and better study habits.

There are certain studies conducted under different contexts which support the present finding that private schools have better performance in favour government and public schools. They include the following. Coughlin and Castilla (2014) found the effect of private schooling has a significant and positive effect on college enrollment and degree attainment. Elias and Kress (1994) found **Private Schools** Facilitate students' critical thinking and the middle school years are the time of increasing critical thinking skills as well, students' academic achievement. Kansal, Baliga, Mallapur, and Katti (2015) assessed the school services in government and private schools of Belgaum and found that private schools provided better services in comparison with government schools. Perry (1988) provided rich examples to support her main argument that, Private schools have better performance Surapur (2015) conducted a study to investigate impact of private school students on study habits. Results of this study indicated the Private school students with high Study habit have more influence on students' performance.

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Conversely, Olatoye (2009) compared study habit and science achievement of students in public and private junior secondary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. There was no significant difference in study habit of students in public and private schools. However, private school students performed significantly better than their public school counterparts in science achievement.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study demonstrate Government and Private school students differ on critical thinking and study habits. Private school students have higher Critical Thinking levels and Study Habits than the government school students. It implies that there is a need on the part of the government setting to work towards developing critical thinking abilities among its students so that they can perform better. The educational processes must adequately address the need for developing thinking abilities in general and critical thinking in particular among its learners. Perhaps this is the most neglected area which needs more attention. Private school students also, have better Study Habits as compared to government school students.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declared no conflict of interests.

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