

Study Habits and Achievement: A Comparison of Medical and Paramedical Students

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ABSTRACT

Background: One of the most basic methods of learning is acquired through study. Study habits and strategies applied to learning facilitate the process. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the study habits of Medical and Paramedical Students in relation to their achievement. **Methods:** This investigation was a descriptive – cross sectional and correlational study. 239 medical and paramedical students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences participated in this census study. Data were collected via study habit (PSSHI) questionnaire. The PSSHI scores were correlated to students' performance. **Results:** The mean and standard deviation of study habits scores were 47.74 ± 9.84 and 50.78 ± 10.02 in paramedical and medical students respectively, showing a significant difference in study habits between two groups of the students ($p \leq 0.05$). The relationship between study habits and academic performance was also significant ($r = 0.25$, $n = 91$, $R^2 = 0.06$, $p < 0.05$). **Conclusions:** The study revealed a significant difference in study habits between medical and paramedical students which reflects the importance of good and planned study habits. In addition, considering the relationship between study habits and academic achievement and importance of medical education, the students should be trained to promote their study habits and strategies.

Keywords: Study habits, Medical students, Paramedical students

Knowledge acquisition is a process that people still know their personality. Human individuals differ from each other and each one has his unique talent and potential in a particular area. Learning is not related to the number of years each one spends in school or college, but it recounts the changes in behavior, manner and culture when assigned to studying concerns. By means of learning and education we mean developing, supervision, and revealing the inherent

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talents of the students. In twenty-second meeting of UNESCO in November 1997 this point was emphasized that the most powerful tool for cultivating peace, justice, mutual understanding, tolerance and equality at that time and the time of subsequent generation is education. It was also emphasized that one of the main goals of education is to transmit knowledge to solve the new problems (Nagaraju. 2004). Studying is one of the most important ways of learning. Some people may think that everybody will find the method of his studying and there is no need to gain information in this field, but today learning styles are considered as technical skills. Despite all the technological advances still learning through reading is the most common mean and a very important part of our learning is gained via reading books (Olejnik & Nist SL. 1998). Surveys in the field of cognitive psychology have shown that learning and study strategies improve the students' academic performance by facilitating the learning process (Woodya, Danielb, & Bakera. 2010). Knowing these strategies that promotes the students success through determining the strengths and weakness of the study is essential for appropriate educational interventions. One of the strategies which can help the students is applying proper study habits. As Crede & Kuncel (2008) stated: "study habits are study routines, including but not restricted to, frequency of studying sessions, review of material, self-testing, rehearsal of learned material, and studying in a conducive environment". Also academic achievement is the extent to which a learner is profiting from instructions in a given area of learning (Crow & Crow. 1969). The effects of students' study habits reflected on the self-regulated processes used during planning and preparation the task, monitoring their progress, and selecting appropriate strategies to reach their goal, have been well documented in the literature. (De la Fuente & Cardelle-Elawar, 2009; Miguel & Pavliushchenko, 2015). The importance of good study habits can never be minimized and since the knowledge and skills of medical professionals may influence the health care delivered to people, it would seem appropriate to assess their learning weakness to promote the services held by these health care providers.

METHODOLOGY

Study population in this research were 250 medical and paramedical students of Kerman University of Medical Sciences in academic year of 2011-2012. Sample size was equal to study population consisted of 104 medical and 150 paramedical students of them 91 medical and 146 paramedical students participated in the study. Data collection was performed using Palsane & Sharma Study Habits Inventory (PSSHI) that consisted of 45 questions in 8 areas. The items had a response choice as always or mostly, sometimes, and never which carries the scores of 2, 1, and 0. The minimum score is 0 and the maximum is 90. The questionnaire had previously been tested for validity and reliability as 0.74 and 0.88 (Ravan Tajhiz.Sina). Independent t test and Spearman and Pearson correlation tests were used for data analyzing and analysis was conducted by SPSS software version 19. $p \leq 0.05$ was considered as significant.

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RESULTS

Thirty eight percent (N=91) of the respondents were medical and sixty eight percent (N=148) were paramedical students.

26.37 percent of medical and 26.35 percent of paramedical students were male and 73.62% of medical and 73.63% of paramedical students were female. The mean and standard deviation of study habits were 47.74 ± 9.84 and 50.78 ± 10.02 in paramedical and medical students respectively.

Independent T test was used to examine the mean difference between the study habits of medical and paramedical students. Data analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the study habits of medical and paramedical students ($t(237) = -2.293, p < 0.05$) (Table 1).

Table 1. Comparing the study habits in medical and paramedical students

| Group | Study habits | | | F | t | df | P value |
|-------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------|--------|-----|---------|
| | n | mean | SD | | | | |
| paramedical | 91 | 47.74 | 9.84 | 0.856 | -2.293 | 237 | 0.02 |
| medical | 148 | 50.78 | 10.02 | | | | |

According to the findings most of the students in the two groups had an average range of study habits scores. Tests of Pearson correlation showed a positive significant relationship between study habits and academic achievement in two groups: ($r = 0.25, n = 91, R^2 = 0.06, p < 0.05$) in medical and ($r = 0.25, n = 148, R^2 = 0.06, p < 0.01$) in paramedical students.

Considering the coefficient of determination it can be concluded that study habits will account for 6% of the variance of students' achievement. A significant relationship was found between boys and girls considering their study habits ($P < 0.05$) and girls were assessed better than boys in their study habits ($t(237) = -2.28, p < 0.05$), (table 2).

Table 2. Comparing the study habits in male and female students

| Group | Study habits | | | F | t | df | P value |
|--------|--------------|-------|-------|-----|------|-----|---------|
| | n | mean | SD | | | | |
| male | 63 | 47.17 | 10.06 | 0.6 | -2.3 | 237 | 0.02 |
| female | 176 | 50.5 | 9.91 | | | | |

DISCUSSION

In this comparative survey we studied the study habits of medical and paramedical students and its relation to academic achievement. A significant difference in study habits between medical and paramedical students was obtained and students of medicine had better study habits which

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reflect the importance of proper and planned study habits to gain admission to higher education. In inspecting the freshmen students' scores on study skills, (Shahidi et al, 2014) also reached the conclusion that students of medicine had the highest score in study skills. When came to study habits it seems that it may be considered as one of the factors for achievement in university entrance examination. On the other hand, according to our results the study habits of the student was at the average level in both groups, supporting Fereidoni & Cheraghian (2009) study revealing 11.2% of medical students with undesirable study habits, 80.7% with fairly good and only 8% with good study habits. In this regard Kooshan & Heidari (2006), also concluded that medical students' study skills were not of good quality. Dhungel et al (2007) studied the study habits of medical students in another aspect, and found that 8% of them prefer class lecturers, 43% used self-study and 5% prefer to use internet. In the study of Bohler et al (2001), 18 out of 81 junior medical students preferred to study in groups and in the other study 42.5% of gynecology residents had devoted special hours for studying (Mardanian & Kazerounizadeh, 2003). Assessment of Beiley (2000) identified the undergraduate students with poor study skills in note taking, reading and time management. Also, Lammers, Onwuegbuzie & Slate (2001) showed that some undergraduate students suffered from unfavorable study habits as: 1- spending much time in one subject and less time devoting to the others, 2-not having enough sleep and drowsiness in the class, 3-failur to allocate adequate focus on study and 4-lack of adequate focus on study.

Based on the finding of this study there was a significant relationship between study habits and students' achievement. Although the intellectual abilities of students have positive association with their scholastic achievement, but some students with a sizable intellectual ability fail at contents that should be successful (Jabeen & Ahmad Khan, 2013). Ansari also found that study habits and study skills were significant variables that predict student's achievement (Ansari, 1980). Onwuegbuzie et al (2001), conducted a series of studies to find out the relationship between study habits and academic success, and reported a positive relationship between them. Nuthana & Yenagi (2009) conducted a study on the influence of study habits and self-concept on the academic achievement and found that subscales of study habits as note taking reading, and concentration had positive correlation with academic achievement and boys and girls had almost similar study habits. Fielden (2013) stated that good study habits is a tool that helps the students in criticism and synthesize. Based on the findings of another study , developing a small medical school preparation course to teach junior students different skills and effective study habits was recommended to help the students make the most of their medical education (Al Shawwa et al, 2015). Our study demonstrated a significant relationship between boys and girls considering their study habits. Adamu Koki & Abdullahi (2014) also found a significant gender differences in study habit skills regarding undergraduate students. In a cross-sectional study by Zarshenas et al (2014), conducted on Dental Students of Shiraz Medical University it was also indicated that the study skills based on gender had statistically significant differences.

CONCLUSION

Study habits seem to be an essential determinant of achievement, academic performance and acquiring proper knowledge. In view of the relationship between study habits and academic achievement and significance of medical education, the students should be trained to promote their study habits and strategies.

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