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Study Habits and Academic Achievement among Government and Private Secondary School Students: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The present study examined differences in study habits and academic achievement between government and private secondary school students. The study employed a quantitative research design using the descriptive survey method. The population comprised secondary school students, from which a sample of 180 students was selected from eight secondary schools. The Study Habits Inventory developed by Deepti Sharma and Masaud Ansari (2020) was used to assess students' study habits, while academic achievement was determined from the percentage of marks obtained by students in their previous annual examination. The findings revealed a statistically significant difference in study habits as well as academic achievement between government and private secondary school students, with private school students obtaining a higher mean score. Furthermore, a statistically significant positive relationship was found between study habits and academic achievement. The findings highlight the importance of developing effective study habits among secondary school students and suggest the need for systematic academic and study-skills support.

Keywords: Study Habits, Academic Achievement, Government Schools, Private Schools, Secondary School Students, School Management

Introduction

Education is a continuous process through which individuals develop knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and competencies necessary for personal and social development. At the school level, academic achievement is one of the important indicators of students' educational progress and provides evidence regarding the extent to which intended learning outcomes have been attained. Academic achievement is commonly reflected through students' performance in examinations and other forms of educational assessment (Hattie, 2009; Richardson et al., 2012).

Study habits constitute an important behavioural component of students' learning processes and include activities such as time management, concentration, reading, note-taking, revision, examination preparation and organisation of study materials (Palsane & Sharma, 1989; Gettinger & Seibert, 2002; Credé & Kuncel, 2008). Research has consistently indicated that students who employ systematic and effective study strategies tend to demonstrate better academic outcomes (Credé & Kuncel, 2008; Nonis & Hudson, 2010; Richardson et al., 2012). Study habits are also associated with motivation, self-regulation and engagement in academic tasks (Zimmerman, 2002; Pintrich, 2004; Mega et al., 2014).

Academic achievement is influenced by multiple interacting factors, including students' learning strategies, motivation, self-regulation, socioeconomic background, parental support and school-related factors (Hattie, 2009; Richardson et al., 2012; Howard et al., 2021).

Consequently, differences in academic achievement cannot be attributed to a single factor. Effective study practices may nevertheless provide students with a structured approach to managing academic demands and preparing for assessments (Dunlosky et al., 2013; Weinstein et al., 2018).

Effective learning techniques are not necessarily identical to the amount of time students spend studying. Evidence indicates that strategies such as practice testing, distributed practice and structured retrieval can be more effective than passive approaches to learning (Dunlosky et al., 2013). Self-regulated learning theory also emphasises students' capacity to plan, monitor and regulate their learning activities (Zimmerman, 2002; Pintrich, 2004). Thus, the quality and organisation of study behaviour are important considerations when examining academic achievement.

The school environment and management type may also be associated with differences in students' academic experiences. Government and private schools may differ in institutional resources, school environment, parental expectations, academic monitoring and other contextual characteristics. However, differences between school types should not automatically be interpreted as differences caused by school management because several student-level and contextual factors may contribute to academic outcomes (Hattie, 2009; Howard et al., 2021).

Previous research has examined differences in study habits and academic achievement according to school type. Several studies have reported more favourable study habits or academic outcomes among private-school students, whereas other studies have found limited or inconsistent differences between government and private school students (Ali & Faaz, 2017; Singh & Mahipal, 2015; Vanlaldinpuia & Lamuanzuali, 2025). Such variations suggest that school type alone may not adequately explain differences in students' academic outcomes and that contextual factors should also be considered.

The relationship between study habits and academic achievement has received considerable empirical attention. Reviews and meta-analytic evidence generally indicate a positive association between students' study behaviours and academic performance, although the magnitude of the relationship varies across populations and types of study behaviour (Credé & Kuncel, 2008; Richardson et al., 2012; Elango & Manimozhi, 2021; Mandal, 2023). Recent evidence similarly suggests that time management, goal setting, self-testing, organised study and other self-regulated learning practices are relevant to academic performance (Dunlosky et al., 2013; Safi, 2025).

Indian studies have likewise examined study habits in relation to academic achievement, gender, socioeconomic status and school type (Razia, 2015; Ozsoy et al., 2017; Sharma & Singh, 2021). However, findings have not been completely consistent across populations and educational contexts. Some studies have reported significant positive relationships, whereas others have reported weak or non-significant relationships. These variations indicate the importance of examining the relationship within specific educational contexts.

Against this background, the present study was undertaken to compare government and private secondary school students with respect to their study habits and academic achievement and to determine the relationship between these two variables. The study is expected to provide useful evidence for teachers, school administrators and educational planners concerned with improving students' learning practices and academic outcomes.

Review of Related Literature

Abid (2006) examined the impact of guidance services on students' study attitudes, study habits and academic achievement and reported improvements in study habits, attitudes and academic achievement following guidance interventions.

Khurshid, Tanvir, and Qasmi (2012) investigated the relationship between study habits and academic achievement among hostel residents and day scholars. Their findings indicated a positive relationship between study habits and academic achievement, although differences were also observed according to residential status and gender.

Kumar and Negi (2013) examined study habits among tenth-grade students in relation to academic achievement and reported a positive association between study habits and students' academic performance.

Yazdani and Godbole (2014) studied the role of study habits and achievement motivation in improving students' academic performance. Their findings indicated that achievement motivation and study habits were positively related to academic performance.

Razia (2015) examined study habits among secondary school students in relation to socioeconomic status and gender. The study reported significant differences in study habits according to gender and a positive relationship between socioeconomic status and study habits.

Singh and Mahipal (2015) investigated the relationship between academic achievement and study habits among secondary school students. The findings indicated a positive and significant relationship and reported similarities in study habits between government and private school students.

Sherafat and Murthy (2016) examined study habits and academic achievement among secondary and senior secondary school students and reported that effective study habits were associated with higher academic achievement.

Ali and Faaz (2017) examined study habits and academic achievement among senior secondary school students in relation to school type and gender. Their study reported a positive relationship between study habits and academic achievement and better study habits among private-school students.

Ozsoy, Memis, and Temur (2017) examined metacognition, study habits and attitudes and reported a positive association between metacognitive knowledge and study habits.

Satyarthi (2018) examined study habits among Indian secondary school students and highlighted the need to improve students' study practices as part of efforts to enhance academic performance.

Elango and Manimozhi (2021) conducted a meta-analysis of research on study habits and academic achievement. The synthesis of 27 studies provided broader evidence concerning the relationship between study habits and academic achievement.

Sharma and Singh (2021) examined academic achievement in relation to study habits among secondary school students and reported positive relationships between academic achievement and selected areas of study habits.

Mandal (2023) conducted a systematic review of research on study habits and academic achievement and reported an overall positive influence of effective study habits on students' academic achievement.

Vanlaldinpuia and Lamuanzuali (2025) examined academic achievement in relation to study habits among high school students in Mizoram and reported significant differences in study habits according to school management.

The reviewed literature generally indicates that effective study habits are positively associated with academic achievement, although the magnitude and direction of findings may differ according to student characteristics and educational contexts. Studies comparing government and private schools have also produced mixed findings. This provides a rationale for examining the issue among secondary school students in the present context.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the difference in study habits between government and private secondary school students.
2. To examine the difference in academic achievement between government and private secondary school students.
3. To determine the relationship between study habits and academic achievement among secondary school students.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in study habits between government and private secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference in academic achievement between government and private secondary school students.
3. There is no significant relationship between study habits and academic achievement among secondary school students.

Method of the Study

Research Design

The study employed a quantitative research design and descriptive survey method to examine differences in study habits and academic achievement between government and private secondary school students and to determine the relationship between the two variables.

Population and Sample

The population of the study comprised secondary school students. A sample of 180 students was selected from eight secondary schools. Of these, 95 students belonged to government schools and 85 students belonged to private schools. The exact sampling procedure should be reported according to the actual procedure followed during data collection; if schools and students were selected at separate stages, both stages should be described.

Research Tools

Study Habits Inventory: The Study Habits Inventory developed by Deepti Sharma and Masaud Ansari (2020) was used to assess students' study habits.

Academic Achievement: Academic achievement was operationalised as the percentage of total marks obtained by students in their previous annual examination.

Statistical Techniques

Mean and standard deviation were used as descriptive statistics. Independent-samples t-tests were used to compare government and private school students on study habits and academic achievement. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was used to determine the relationship between study habits and academic achievement.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Hypothesis-1

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in study habits between government and private secondary school students.

Variable	School Type	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Study Habits	Government	95	165.04	9.14	178	6.402	< .001
	Private	85	172.59	6.79			

The results indicate a statistically significant difference in study habits between government and private secondary school students. Private-school students obtained a higher mean study-habits score (M = 172.59, SD = 6.79) than government-school students (M = 165.04, SD = 9.14). The obtained t-value 6.402 (df= 178, p<.001, indicating a significant difference. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis-2

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in academic achievement between government and private secondary school students.

Variable	School Type	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Academic Achievement	Government	95	64.16	5.37	178	8.378	< .001
	Private	85	71.06	5.97			

The results reveal a statistically significant difference in academic achievement between government and private secondary school students. Private-school students obtained a higher mean academic-achievement score (M = 71.06, SD = 5.97) than government-school students (M = 64.16, SD = 5.37). The obtained t-value 8.17 (df= 178, p<.001, indicating a significant difference. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis-3

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between study habits and academic achievement among secondary school students.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	R	p
Study Habits	180	168.62	8.933	.348	< .001
Academic Achievement	180	67.43	6.621		

Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the relationship between study habits and academic achievement. The obtained correlation coefficient was positive and statistically significant (r = .348, p < .001). This indicates a positive relationship between study habits and academic achievement. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Note: The correlation table should be checked against the original dataset/output to ensure that the reported mean and SD values and correlation coefficient correspond to the same 180 cases.

Results and Discussion

The findings indicate a significant difference in study habits between government and private secondary school students. Private-school students obtained a higher mean study-habits score than government-school students. This finding is consistent with research reporting differences in study habits according to school management (Ali & Faaz, 2017; Vanlaldinpuia & Lamuanzuali, 2025). However, differences in study habits between school types should be interpreted cautiously because school management may be associated with several other contextual factors.

A significant difference was also found in academic achievement, with private-school students obtaining a higher mean score than government-school students. The finding indicates a difference between the two groups in the sample studied; however, it should not be interpreted as evidence that private-school attendance itself causes higher academic

achievement. Factors such as parental education, socioeconomic background, prior achievement, attendance, teacher support, learning environment and students' motivation may also contribute to differences in academic performance (Hattie, 2009; Howard et al., 2021).

The study further revealed a significant positive relationship between study habits and academic achievement ($r = .348$, $p < .001$). This finding is consistent with research reporting a positive association between study habits and academic performance (Credé & Kuncel, 2008; Richardson et al., 2012; Elango & Manimozhi, 2021; Mandal, 2023). Effective study practices such as structured practice, retrieval, time management and self-regulation may support academic learning (Dunlosky et al., 2013; Zimmerman, 2002). Nevertheless, because the present study is correlational, the finding should not be interpreted as evidence that study habits directly cause higher achievement.

Findings of the Study

A statistically significant difference was found in study habits between government and private secondary school students. Private-school students obtained higher mean study-habits scores.

A statistically significant difference was found in academic achievement between government and private secondary school students. Private-school students obtained higher mean academic-achievement scores.

A statistically significant positive relationship was found between study habits and academic achievement among secondary school students.

Educational Implications

- Teachers should provide systematic guidance in time management, concentration, note-taking, revision, examination preparation and organisation of independent study.
- Schools may organise study-skills and learning-strategy programmes to help students develop effective and self-regulated learning practices.
- Government schools may particularly benefit from structured academic counselling, study-skills support and periodic monitoring of students' learning practices.
- Parents can support students by providing an appropriate study environment, encouraging regular study routines and promoting consistent academic engagement.
- School authorities should focus not merely on increasing study time but also on improving the quality, organisation and effectiveness of students' learning activities.

Limitations

The study has certain limitations. First, the sample was restricted to 180 secondary school students from eight schools; therefore, the findings should not automatically be generalised to all secondary school students. Second, academic achievement was based on examination performance, which may be influenced by several factors beyond study habits. Third, the study employed a cross-sectional descriptive design; consequently, causal relationships cannot be established. Future studies may include larger samples and examine additional

variables such as socioeconomic status, parental education, school environment, motivation, attendance and access to educational resources.

Conclusion

The study concludes that significant differences exist between government and private secondary school students in both study habits and academic achievement within the sampled population. Private-school students obtained higher mean scores on both variables. The study also established a statistically significant positive relationship between study habits and academic achievement. The findings emphasise the importance of developing systematic and effective study habits among secondary school students. At the same time, differences between government and private schools should be interpreted within broader educational, social and family contexts rather than being attributed solely to school management.

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