

ASSESSING STUDY HABITS OF STUDENTS IN HIGHER EDUCATION DURING THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Marcelle Jean A. Lagutin*

Bryan B. Marcial

EryleEdvin E. Protacio

Keynard L. Ponce

Cherry May M. Enriquez

Western Mindanao State University
Zamboanga City, Philippines

Abstract

To study is to buy time and devote oneself to application, and the task of studying is to become immersed in a process of learning, practice, and self-enlightenment education. Thus, one's study habits can be deduced from the above as allocating scheduled and uninterrupted time to the goal of learning. Without it, an individual cannot progress and becomes self-limiting. The goal of this study was to determine the study patterns of tertiary students during the COVID 19 epidemic. The research is quantitative and descriptive in design. It was conducted in one of the state institutions in Zamboanga City and the Zamboanga Peninsula, and the respondents were 66 graduating students with no back subjects. This study's primary instrument is a survey questionnaire designed by researchers and validated by subject matter experts. The results revealed that the majority of respondents, 95.5%, spent two to four hours studying their lectures using various tactics or strategies. It was also observed that the bulk of their study habits were average. In addition to reviewing and examining students' study habits at the time of university admission, students should receive specific instruction to help them improve their study habits for more efficient learning.

Keywords: *assessment, study habits, higher education, COVID 19 pandemic, study time*

Introduction

Many of these learning opportunities have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly those that involve in-person interaction with peers and patients or large groups. The long-term effects of adapting a large portion of the curriculum to an online format are still unknown. During the COVID-19 pandemic, universities across the globe have shifted to distance education, with the majority of courses designed for online delivery. Understandably, the global spread of COVID-19 resulted in lockdowns and closures of schools. Meng et al. (2020) argued that education has changed in nearly every nation. Universities have changed how they teach and learn since the COVID-19 pandemic spread, and professors are now teaching online classes (Rahim and Chandran, 2021).

This has resulted in significant adjustments to the educational process for some students and teachers. They are not all accustomed to working online with a variety of platforms and learning management systems, nor are they accustomed to not seeing their peers in person. Students face a variety of obstacles, some of which have the potential to become serious issues. That is why, it is very important for educators to look into the coping mechanisms of the students especially during the pandemic. Parojenog (2021) et. al found out in their study that Senior High school students have resorted to different learning techniques to cope with the blended learning that the Department of Education started to implement when the COVID pandemic struck. Respondents claimed that the support of their family and friends helped a lot to remain steadfast in their studies, even though the situation was tough.

Farooq, Rathore, and Mansoor (2020) identified problems such as an inadequate level of institutional support, a lack of student engagement, problems with online assessments, accessibility issues, and broader problems with comprehending the dynamics of online education. Kapasia et al. (2020) demonstrated that students experience anxiety, depression, and stress as well as poor network connectivity and a hostile learning environment. Siblings and other distractions can make learning difficult at home. All of these changes, challenges, and issues affect how

students learn and how they study. We wanted to find out if students had altered their study habits during the COVID-19 pandemic as part of our research.

Odiri (2015) defines study habit as "unique individual behavior in relation to studying" (Arora) and as a combination of study technique and skill (Kamoru, 2017). In other terms, study habits are behaviors and skills that can increase motivation and transform studying into an efficient, high-return process, hence improving learning. Research reveals that learners who lack enough knowledge of study techniques do not obtain effective and steady learning, and so do not achieve an optimal level of academic success (Arora). In other words, kids with higher academic achievement make greater use of these talents than students with lower academic accomplishment (Rezaie, 2017)

It was observed that students' study habits changed after the pandemic. Aresteidou's (2021) online survey of undergraduates at The Open University in the United Kingdom collected data on demographics, study-related information, personal circumstances, and changes in study habits. On average, 36% of the study population reported positive impacts, while 15% reported negative impacts as a result of their participation in the study. Logarithmic regression analysis ($n = 269$) found that challenges in managing course load and limited engagement with other students were associated with detrimental impacts on overall study practices. In addition to socioeconomic background, study level, mentor contact, age, personal health, career concerns, and childcare and caregiving duties, a variety of other factors affect individual study habits. Our results have significance for universities with new or established remote learning methods for how to handle these concerns and provide better support for continued learning engagements during COVID-19 and other similar diversions. The previously mentioned factors were also known to be positively affecting the research competence of students in higher education. These factors are contributory to their perception that, during the COVID-19 pandemic, they still believed that they possessed a high level of research competence despite the online mode of teaching (Saavedra et.al, 2021). Jereb, Jerebic&Urh (2023) emphasized the same findings in their study. They looked into whether there had been shifts in studying time, studying space, the way students studied and learned during lectures, social factors, and the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning. They discovered that certain studying habits differed depending on the time and place of study, primarily due to the prohibition against moving and socializing outside the home. The researchers observed a decline in motivation, which they linked to students' difficulty focusing on learning and the setting of lower learning objectives. However, it is positive to note that the new method of education gives students more freedom, so some students want to continue in the same way. Among the several learning strategies, learning with the aid of technology, still the best support to students regardless of their level. Saavedra (2018) proved in her study that even in developing the writing skills of the elementary learners, different technology-aided strategies had been very helpful.

Although these scenarios are also evident among students in the Philippines, still the researchers are motivated to explore the study habits of Filipino tertiary students, especially in one of the universities in the Zamboanga Peninsula.

Related Literature and Studies

Effect of Pandemic to Students' Learning

Gonzalez et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative analysis and discovered that students' performance prior to and during the COVID-19 pandemic was considerably different. They identified statistically significant changes in student performance between years, with students from 2017 and 2018 performing much better than those from 2020. Ardan et al. (2020) revealed that the COVID-19 outbreak has spiritual and psychological effects on the pupils in Indonesia. According to the majority of respondents, their anxiety levels were either high or moderate.

According to Day et al. (2021), the anxiety produced by the COVID-19 outbreak made it difficult for students to learn. Moreover, they claimed that test centers and universities withheld exams, preventing students from enrolling to colleges and universities. Several instructors have cut practice and instruction time or reduced online lectures, resulting in inadequate student learning. According to Goldstein et al. (2020), Hamilton et al. (2020), and Wyse et al. (2020), a significant number of students' limited access to teachers' shared materials. A poor degree of student involvement with online learning is demonstrated by the fact that many students did not even log into the online learning system. Moreover, they reported that the pandemic of COVID-19 had a negative effect on student learning.

Study Habits

According to Urh&Jereb (2014), methods and means of acquiring information can be referred to as studying habits. This could happen in a conscious or unconscious way. According to Carter, Bishop, & Kravits (2011), they assist students in organizing their efforts to solve problems, acquire knowledge, and complete schoolwork. Volpp&Loewenstein (2020) stated that habits are typically defined in the psychology literature as behaviors that are automatically activated by recurring environmental cues. Habits are also thought to be typically formed through repetitive behavior and learned associations between stimulus and response.

The process by which actions become automatic is known as habit formation. We can make propensities without meaning to get them or we can deliberately cultivate or eradicate them (Psychology Today, 2021). According to Urh&Jereb (2014), which is cited in Butler & Hope (1995), habits are behaviors that are mostly subconscious and consist of regular repetition. Once patterns are established, people act without making a conscious decision to do so, even if the behavior is not proximally motivated by the deliberate pursuit of concrete objectives (Gardner, 2015). It is hard to break new habits and hard to break old ones. This is due to the fact that our neural pathways are etched with the behavior patterns that we most frequently repeat. Even when attention or motivation decrease, habits may persist. The good news is that changing one's habits is possible (Psychology Today, 2021). According to Wood & R  nger (2016), a significant implication is that, in order to alter behavior, one frequently needs to break old patterns by controlling exposure to cues and creating new ones.

The effect of the unprecedented crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic and the initial wave of lockdowns on student life has been the focus of a growing body of scholarship from campus-based academic institutions, with a focus on the academic work, daily lives, and mental health of students. Loveless (2021) asserts that while some students are unable to succeed academically, others are able to. Students who are successful do so by developing and implementing efficient study habits. They plan out the times of the week when they will study and stick to their plan. Students with a plan and a schedule perform better than students who study occasionally. Students should incorporate study time into their daily schedules. It's not always possible to fit all of the study time into a few long days, and it can be stressful. Every day should include studying time. Self-control and consistency are essential. Learning effective study strategies will become ingrained in one's routine and assist in sustaining high grades throughout the academic year. Students should choose blocks of time when they are at their best when scheduling study time (Develop Good Habits, 2021). Some people are more productive in the morning than at night. Jafari et al. (2019) also stated that the mean grade point average for students was 15.73 ± 1.5 out of 20 and that the mean overall study habits status was 45.70 ± 11.36 out of 90. 81.3% of students reported having moderate study habits. Study habits were directly and significantly linked to academic achievement. Saavedra (2020) noted in her study that students' expressive skills before and after the pandemic did not really have a significant difference so long as teachers continued to employ computer-assisted teaching strategies, be it in the online or face-to-face mode of teaching.

Adjusting Your Study Habits During COVID-19: Seven Suggestions

Hagger (2022) has enumerated the following tips:

1. **Maintain orderliness.** Due to the numerous changes in your courses, you may be experiencing first-week uncertainty at the rate of finals week. Additionally, you may need to learn how to pace yourself throughout your courses, which can be stressful. These are some important considerations for each class:

Whether or not your class will continue to meet at the regularly scheduled time virtually.

- If not, are there any new components of the course, such as a discussion board, for which you will need to keep track?
- Do assignments fluctuate? Are there any new deadlines? Will online quizzes and exams be administered? What should you do if you require assistance?
- Does the professor offer online office hours? when and which platform?
- Does the course provide a forum for online question submissions?

2. **Avoid multitasking.** You may be more inclined to multitask if you do more work on your own and your time is less organized. According to research, few people can handle numerous things at once or move between activities fast. Try concentrating on a task for 25 minutes, followed by a 5-minute break. According to research, this pattern enhances concentration and reduces "cognitive boredom" in the majority of individuals. Here's an excellent tool to help you concentrate for 25 minutes at a time!

3. Make the most of video lectures. Here are Some tips:

- Learn how to ask inquiries. Is there a chat option? A conversation forum?
- Avoid multitasking by closing distracting apps and tabs.
- Continue to take notes as though you were present in person. Numerous studies demonstrate that taking notes improves recollection and helps to raise exam performance.
- Play back recordings at regular speed. Faster viewing rates might reduce retention and lead to lower exam scores.

4. Set a schedule. If your day lacks structure, creating a timetable for yourself might help you stay on track and motivated. Try utilizing a weekly or daily calendar if you don't already. Incorporate time for physical activity, being outside, and self-care.

If you hate following a timetable, keep a generic to-do list and just mark essential due dates on your calendar. You may use your phone's reminder app to remind you when homework is due or when you should get some fresh air.

5. Find what works for you. Everyone has their own study habits and ways of remembering data. Perhaps you could study on a chair rather than on your bed or couch. As you switch duties, you may need to relocate. Is it necessary to have background noise? What about using a white noise app? If you're used to studying in groups, consider a virtual or phone-based study session with your classmates.

6. Working with a group or team on a project. It will appear differently, but remote collaboration is still possible. Avoid procrastination at all costs. If you don't see your group members on a regular basis, you may forget about the group project. To ensure that everyone is on the same page, schedule recurring virtual meetings and take notes on a shared document.

7. Maintain your connection and engagement. Connecting with family and friends virtually might be more necessary than ever during social distancing. Consider:

- Making video calls to relatives and friends. When you are concerned or anxious about anything, talking to loved ones may be really beneficial.
- It is also necessary to take breaks to laugh.
- Attend virtual office hours or study groups to keep up with your courses.

Research Question

1. What is the respondents' Study Hour and Study Habits during pandemic?

Methodology

The study is quantitative in nature with a descriptive design. It was conducted in one of the state universities in Zamboanga City, Zamboanga Peninsula. The study involved 66 graduating students as respondents with no back subjects that may hinder them from graduating this academic year 2021-2022. The survey questionnaire is the primary instrument for this study which was formulated by the researchers and validated by experts. Taking into consideration the university's restrictions, the researchers decided to gather data through Google Forms, the survey questionnaire was distributed to the respondents through email or Facebook message invitation which includes a letter of consent to conduct the study and a hyperlink to the Google Forms website where the survey will be hosted and conducted, the instructions on how to answer the questionnaire was also included. The respondents are given a maximum of 2 days to answer and return the given survey and interview guide.

This study's respondents were primarily selected using purposive sampling. It is a non-probability sampling technique in which the researcher carefully selects the participants based on the purpose of the study, with the expectation that each respondent will be able to provide rich and unique data relevant to the study. The statistical methods used to interpret and respond to the research questions were frequency count and percentage.

Results and Discussions

Table 1 below shows the number of study hours of the respondents. 2-4 hours obtained the highest frequency count of 63 with a percentage of 95.5%. 3 respondents or 4.5% of them utilized 5-7 hours a day in studying their lessons. This data tells that most of the student studies 2-4 hours per day.

Table 1. Study Hours of the Respondents

Study Hours	F	%
2-4 hours	63	95.5%
5-7 hours	3	4.5%
8-10 hours	0	0
Total	66	100%

Table 2.below presents the study habits of tertiary students. The data shows that the following indicators ‘*I take down notes in class*’, ‘*I am always focused during class*’, ‘*I proactively participate in group work*’, and ‘*I finish my homework on time*’ were rated “often” with a frequency of 30, 35, 32, 29 and has a percentage of 45.5%, 53%, 48.5%, and 43.9% respectively. Using these rates as a foundation implies that graduating BS Accountancy students have had extensive practice with the aforementioned indicators.

Moreover, the items ‘*I participate during class*’ and ‘*I prepare for classes beforehand or review what I learned*’ were rated as “sometimes” which have the highest frequency and percentage of 36 or 54.5% and 42 or 63.6%, which means they usually practice these habits. Likewise, the indicators ‘*I use my phone during class*’, ‘*I space out during class*’ and ‘*I study while watching tv or I listen to music*’ were also rated “sometimes” and got the following frequencies and percentage of 25, 27, 19 or 37.9%, 40.9%, and 28.8%, respectively. This indicates that the respondents are performing these habits more often.

Hence, the item ‘*I take naps during class*’ which is the only one that got rated as “rarely” with a frequency and percentage of 24 or 36.4%, shows that most of the graduating students of BS Accountancy don’t usually practice this habit.

(supporting studies)

Table 2. Study Habits of the Respondents

Study Habits	F	%
I take down notes in class.		
Always	10	15.2%
Often	30	45.5%
Sometimes	23	34.8%
Rarely	3	4.5%
Never	0	0
TOTAL	66	100.0%
I take naps during class.		
Always	2	3%
Often	9	13.6%
Sometimes	18	27.3%
Rarely	24	36.4%
Never	13	19.7%
TOTAL	66	100.0%
I use my phone during class.		

Always	9	13.6%
Often	14	21.2%
Sometimes	25	37.9%
Rarely	15	22.7%
Never	3	4.6%
TOTAL	66	100.0%
I space out during class.		
Always	11	16.7%
Often	18	27.3%
Sometimes	27	40.9%
Rarely	8	12.1%
Never	2	3%
TOTAL	66	100.0%
I participate during class.		
Always	5	7.6%
Often	13	19.7%
Sometimes	36	54.5%
Rarely	12	18.2%
Never	0	0
TOTAL	66	100.0%
I am always focused during class.		
Always	4	6.1%
Often	35	53%
Sometimes	25	37.9%
Rarely	1	1.5%
Never	1	1.5%
TOTAL	66	100.0%
I proactively participate on group works.		
Always	22	33.3%
Often	32	48.5%
Sometimes	9	13.6%
Rarely	3	4.6%
Never	0	0
TOTAL	66	100.0%
I finish my homework on time.		
Always	25	37.9%
Often	29	43.9%
Sometimes	7	10.6%
Rarely	5	7.6%
Never	0	0
TOTAL	66	100.0%
I study while watching tv or I listen to music.		
Always	10	15.2%
Often	15	22.7%
Sometimes	19	28.8%
Rarely	10	15.2%
Never	12	18.1%
TOTAL	66	100.0%

I prepare for classes beforehand or review what I learned.		
Always	2	3%
Often	18	27.3%
Sometimes	42	63.6%
Rarely	4	6.1%
Never	0	0
TOTAL	66	100.0%

Conclusion

Study habits are the typical tendencies and practices that individual exhibits during the process of acquiring knowledge. Simply described, study habits are the behaviors that an individual cultivates when studying. They are created in reaction to long-standing practices, which stem from our official and informal schooling within our particular cultural contexts. Behavior, which is impacted by attitude, reveals a person's habits. Once an attitude is formed, it influences behavior, which eventually becomes a routine. The study also finds that a student must have quality study time in order to build an effective study routine. Assimilation is heavily influenced by the timing and duration of a student's exposure to learning material, making it an essential factor to consider when measuring academic progress. The amount of time that students devote to self-education will depend on their habits. The majority of students in this research displayed average study habits. In addition to analyzing students' study habits at the time of university entrance, students should receive individualized training to help them develop or modify their study habits in hopes of enhancing their academic performance.

References

- Ardan, M. ,Rahman,F. , Geroda, G. (2020). The influence of physical distance to student anxiety on COVID-19, Indonesia.*J. Crit. Rev.*, 7 (17), pp. 1126-1132
- Areteidou, M. (2021) Disrupted distance learning: the impact of Covid-19 on study habits of distance learning university students.*Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning Volume 36, 2021 - Issue 3: Open Voices on COVID-19*
- Carter, C., Bishop, J., &Kravits S. L. (2011). Keys to Effective Learning: Study Skills and Habits for Success, 6/E. Prentice-Hall.
- Day, T., Chang, I., Chung, C., Doolittle, Housel, W., & McDaniel, P. (2021).The immediate impact of COVID-19 on postsecondary teaching and learning.*Prof. Geogr.*, 73 (1) (2021), pp. 1-13
- Develop Good Habits, (2021). 11 Good Study Habits to Better Understand your Lessons. Retrieved from: <https://www.developgoodhabits.com/good-study-routine>
- Farooq, F., Rathore, F. A., &Mansoor, S. N. (2020). Challenges of Online Medical Education in Pakistan During COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of the College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan*, 30(1), 67-69
- Gardner, B. (2015). A review and analysis of the use of habit in understanding, predicting, and influencing health-related behaviour.*Health Psychology Review*, 9(3), 277-295
- Goldstein, D., Popescu, A., Hannah-Jones, N. (2020). As Classes Go Online, many Students Just Aren't Showing up. *New York Times* (2020 April 6)
- Gonzalez, T., De La Rubia, M., Hincz, K., ComasLopez, Subirats, M., Fort, S., G.M. Sacha, G. (2020). Influence of COVID-19 confinement on students' performance in higher education. *PLoS One*, 15 (10) (2020), Article e0239490
- Hagger, K. (2022) .Seven Tips for Adjusting Your Study Habits During COVID-19. Admissions Blog.*Disability Counselor*. 2022<https://www.meredith.edu/admissions-blog/seven-tips-for-adjusting-your-study-habits-during-covid-19/>
- Hamilton, L., Grant, D., Kaufman, J., Diliberti,M., Schwartz, H., Hunter, G., Setodji, C., Young, C.(2020). COVID-19-19 and the State of K–12 Schools: Results and Technical Documentation from the spring 2020 American Educator Panels COVID-19-19 Surveys. *Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Public License, RR-A168-1(2020)*
- Jafari, H. ,Aghaei, A. &Khatony, A. (2019) Relationship between study habits and academic achievement in students of medical sciences in Kermanshah-Iran.*Advances in Medical Education and Practice*

- Jereb, E., Jerebic, J. & Urh, M. (2023). Athens Journal of Education - Volume 10, Issue 1, February 2023 – Pages 67-84 <https://doi.org/10.30958/aje.10-1-4> doi=10.30958/aje.10-1-4 Studying Habits in Higher Education Before and After the Outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Kamoru, U. & Ramon O. (2017). Influence of self-concept, study habit and gender on attitude and achievement of secondary school students in mathematics. *J Leadersh Instruction*. 2017;16(1):49–52.
- Kapasias, N., Paul, P., Roy, A., Saha, J., Zaveri, A., & Mallick, R., (2020). Impact of Lockdown on Learning Status of Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students During COVID-19 Pandemic in West Bengal, India. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 116(Sep), 105194
- Loveless, B. (2021). 10 Habits of Highly Effective Students. Retrieved from: <https://www.educationcorner.com/habits-of-successful-students.html>.
- Meng, L., F. Hua, F., & Bian, Z. (2020) Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): emerging and future challenges for dental and oral medicine.
- Odori, O. (2015). Relationship of study habits with mathematics achievement. *J Educ Pract*. 2015;6(10):168–170.
- Psychology Today (2021). Habit Formation. Retrieved from: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/basics/habit-formation>.
- Rahim, M., & Chandran, S. (2021). Investigating EFL students' perceptions on E-learning paradigm-shift during COVID-19 pandemic. *Elsya: J. Engl. Lang. Stud.*, 3 (1) (2021), pp. 56-66
- Rezaei L., Seyed, F., Reza, M., Chehrzad, M., Kazem, N. (2017). The relationship between the study habits and the academic performance of medical sciences students. *J Holistic Nurs Midwifery*. 2017;27(2):65–73. doi:10.18869/acadpub.hnmj.27.2.65
- Parojenog, M., Eyo II, E., Saavedra, A., Muarip, V., Pahulaya, V., & Labastilla, F. (2021). Coping mechanisms of the senior high school learners in addressing the concerns in the use of the blended learning modality during the COVID-19 pandemic. *International Journal of Health Sciences 1 (Special Issue)*, 7645–7652.
- Saavedra, A., Alejandro, W., Espinosa, R. (2021). Self-perceived Research Competence among Social Sciences Students: An Investigative Survey during the COVID-19 Pandemic *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 4211-4221
- Saavedra, A. Technology engagement and writing skill: An analysis among elementary-grade Filipino learners. *Webology (ISSN: 1735-188X)* 15 (1)
- Saavedra, A. (2020). An exploration on the expressive skills among elementary-grade learners: A bedrock for the development of computer-assisted teaching strategies *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education (TURCOMAT)* 11 (3)
- Saavedra, A. (2020). Varied strategies in improving the linguistic competence of selected elementary teachers: an action research. *Elementary Education Online* 15 (Issue 2), pp. 723-727
- Urh, M., & Jereb, E. (2014). Learning habits in higher education. *procedia - social and Behavioral Sciences*, 116(Feb), 350-355.
- Volpp, K. G., & Loewenstein, G. (2020). What is a habit? diverse mechanisms that can produce sustained behaviour change. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 161(3), 36-38.
- Wood, W., & Rünger, D. (2016). Psychology of Habit. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 67(1), 289-314
- Wyse, A., Stickney, E., D. Butz, Beckler, A., & Close, C. (2020). The potential impact of COVID-19 on student learning and how schools can respond. *Educ. Meas. Iss. Pract.*, 39 (3) (2020), pp. 60-64