Measuring the impact of study habits on student academic performance in KSA

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Abstract

Student learning attitudes/habits represents a major factor affecting the learning processes. Identifying factors that affect student performance is the major task attracts educational research recently. The purpose of the study was to examine the relationships among study habits, and learning performances in addition to, the impact of some external factors such as family follow-up on student performance. This study adopted a descriptive survey design due to the implicit nature of the study. The study involve sample (120 students) collected from university level students in Saudi Arabia. The data was captured and arranged with the use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Analysis reveals significant relationships between parents education level and student success rate. Moreover, habits like repeating some parts periodically to overcome forgetting, Writing points in lecture during class time, less lectures absence during semester, using additional materials to support understanding, using internet as source of additional materials to support understanding and reading in silence had a positive effect on student success rate. In context of family support, the effect of enforcing students to study and encourage them by parents has a great effect on their academic performance. It's important to note that student financial level doesn't have big impact on success rate. Another habits such as covering only selected parts from reference for exam and increasing the studying hours in exam period only has a negative effect on student success rate.

Keywords—*attitudes, learning behaviours, study habits, demographic information.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Many factors affect the success of a learning environment. Beliefs, value and attitude can have both positive and negative effects on a learner's success. Attitude and habits have one of the largest impacts on a learner's success (Langat & Alphine,2014) which doesn't attract enough attention from all stakeholders in education. Therefore, it is important to consider the fact that learners can mainly contribute to their learning outcomes as a result of their belief, perceptions and behaviors (Langat & Alphine,2014).some researchers define Study habits as external factors that facilitate the study process such as sound study routines that include how often a student engage in studying sessions, review the material, self-evaluate and studying in a conducive environment (Credé ,2008).

Learning habits are critical to academic success (Wolfe, Alison,2009). It reflect students' usual act of studying and also call forth and serve to direct the learner's cognitive processes during learning. Study habits includes a variety of activities including: time management, setting appropriate goals, choosing an appropriate study environment, using appropriate note-taking strategies, choosing main ideas, and organization (ÜnalÇakıroğlu ,2014).

Number of studies investigated the effect of student learning attitudes and behaviors on his/her success. Russelland Julie in 2006 (Benford, Russell, and Julie,2006) published a research on identifying factors affecting student academic success in gateway courses at Northern Arizona university. They collected data to 719 students in 7 gateway courses. Their study reached to result that possible causes of students low grades are inadequate student recruitment standards, student academic under preparedness, lack of student and faculty ethnic and cultural diversity and interaction, and ineffective and inequitable instructional techniques. George et.al. Presented report on post-secondary student success (Kuh, George ,2006). Their goal was to develop an informed perspective on policies, programs, and practices that can make a difference to satisfactory student performance in postsecondary education. Their report attempted to address the set of critical issues by synthesizing the relevant literature and emerging findings related to student success.

Alison in (Wolfe, Alison,2009) examined student attitudes towards study skills. He used a survey designed to address multiple issues related to study skills and habits and learning style. Another attempt was made by fielden in 2004 (Fielden, K,2005). He stated that good study habits help the student in critical reflection in skills outcomes such as selecting, analyzing and synthesizing. In 2014 Langat and Alphine presented a study of students' attitudes and their effects towards Learning and achievement in mathematics (Langat, Alphine,2014). Their study reveals that most students had a positive attitude towards mathematics and they perceived mathematics as doable, learnable and important yet this did not translated to good grades. Their findings also showed that perceptions, beliefs and previous performances of students in mathematics affected the level of motivation that leading to low outcomes which has a great effect on student achievement on mathematics.
Previous to this investigation, Ivan Montes conducted a study about habits and attitudes of college students in Spain (2012)(Cerna, Miguel A & Kseniao,2015). Montes tracked changes in study habits in college students from the time they entered the program to the time of

graduation (5 years). Previously to Montes, Darwing (Dahl, D. W,2011) presented a study on the topic of study habits with sophomore students whose major was accounting. Luisa Baquiran L. A. (2011) also in the Philippines, conducted a similar study with freshman students from different majors (Cerna, Miguel A & Kseniao,2015). Greene, Marti and McClenney (2008) conducted a cross-cultural study focused on effort of African American and Hispanic college students. Gilbert Wrenn C. C. (1933) published one of the first study habits inventories in the United States (Cerna, Miguel A & Kseniao,2015). Wrenn C. C.'s inventory was originally designed for men, but was modified later for women. He suggested that study habits might correspond to academic success if ability was controlled (Thompson, 1976). All studies conducted after Wrenn C. C. and Brown W. F. (1972)(Brown,1972) utilized slight modifications of the existing SSHA developed by Wrenn, C. C. and later modified by Brown, W. F.. They all agreed that study habits significantly influence academic performance.
The Brown, W. F. Holtzman Survey of Study Habits Attitudes (SSHA) Inventory is generally acknowledged as one of the best study habit attitude inventories in the United States (Brown, W. F. ,1955)[12]. They introduced a questionnaire concerning study habits and attitudes in 1953; the original inventory had 75 items. There have been several revisions (the most recent in 1967), and the length of the inventory is now 100 items. This inventory, which is widely used as a research tool, has four scales: 1) Work methods—use of effective study procedures, skill and efficiency in doing academic assignments. 2) Delay avoidance—promptness in completing assignments and ability to resist distractions. 3) Teacher approval—feelings and opinions about teachers, their classroom behavior, and their methods. 4) Educational acceptance—approval of educational objectives, practices and requirements (Cerna, Miguel A & Kseniao,2015) .
the most recent research on study habits and attitudes of college students is the research done by Miguel A. Cerna1 &Ksenia in (2015) [9]. They estimated the global validity of existing constructs and serves as the basis for the development of the Self-Reported Study Habits

for International Students (SR-SHI) used to identify at-risk students in international programs. One-year classroom observations, recollection of study habits though interviews with high performing students show that they are mainly from low-context and individualistic countries while most low performing students come from high-context and collectivistic countries.

Another direction of research done investigated the relationship between study time and student performance.   In (Nonis, S. A. ,2010) authors investigated the influence of a third variable, study habit, on learning process. Based on a sample of business students, results showed some study habits had a positive direct relationship on student performance but others had a negative direct relationship. Results also showed 1 study habit moderated the relationship between study time and student performance positively, but another study habit moderated the relationship negatively. Discussion of the findings, implications, and directions for further research are also provided.

It is important to note that no much research done in this issue in Saudi Arabian universities. So, the main goal of the paper is to identify student studying habits that can affect their performance in Saudi universities. The subsequence sections are organized as follows: section II present simple student learning habits framework. Section III describes data collection and analysis processes. Then the following section highlights results. Finally, conclusion is presented.

II. STUDENT LEARNING HABITS FRAMEWORK

Researches points to a variety of factors leading to student's attitude and behaviors towards special subject/s. According to that study attempt to highlight the most affecting factors related to student/learner habits and effect of family follow-up on their academic performance. The work on the study was divided into two phases: data collection phase and data analysis phase. Data collection done by simple survey contains 24 questions about the normal studying habits and the family role on improving student performance in addition to some demographic information. A structured questioner was used because of its usefulness in large scale surveys. This study is benefit from Kolb's learning cycle and study habits framework (ÜNALÇAKIROĞLU ,2014) with a little modification to suit study purpose. Figure 1 bellow shows study framework.
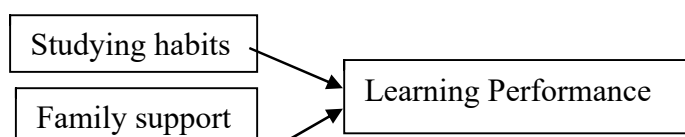
Fig.1: Study framework

The following is the questions appear in survey used for data collection.

Table1: survey questions

Demographic information	Student Level: First 　　　　　　　　Second 　　　　　　　　Third Fourth (Alumni)
	Age:18-20　　　　　20-25
	Section: Management 　　　　　Computer science
	Father education: Primary level Secondary level University level Higher education

	Mother education: Primary level Secondary level University level Higher education	
	Financial level: Moderate High	
Studying habits	What is your success rate in the last level?	
	How many hour you study per day?	
	How many hour you study per day at examination period?	
	Do you organize your time?	
	Do you have reading plan before exams?	
	Do you use handouts from the main reference	
	Do you highlight special parts during study	
	Do you depend on sample questions and answers way in your study	
	Do you repeat some parts periodically to overcome Forgetting	
Studying habits in class	Are you missing 3 lectures or less in semester?	
	Do you take notes in class?	
	Attend group study session with classmate?	
	Are you on time for class?	
	Did you read supporting materials in any language?	
	Study in silence and alone most times?	
	Do you use internet resources to improve performance	
	Do you use internet application (Google apps.) in your study	
Family support	Did your parents follow-up you grades	
	Did your parents enforce you to study strongly	

III. **DATA COLLECTION:**

A total of 120 questionnaires were successfully filled and collected for the study. The 120 respondents formed 60% of the populations in the class considered. 22% of the respondents were aged between 18-20 years .Majority of the respondents were Alumni forming 80%while the rest respondents from different level.

Collected data are further revised and coded to facilitate analysis process. For the first six questions in studying habits coding are done such as: Q1: What is your success rate in the last level? If success rate less than 2 it labeled as low and if rate between 2 and 3labeled as moderate lastly if more than 3 labeled as high. For question two and three Q2: How many hour you study per day? Q3:How many hour you study per day at examination period? If hours less than 2 per day labeled as low if more labeled as high. Q4 and Q5: studying level for student parents

have 4 choices for1: Primary level, 2: Secondary level, 3: University level and 4: Higher education. Q6 asking about financial level of student family and provide two choices (1 for high and 2 for moderate). The rest questions had three choices (yes, No, sometimes). The following part addressed analysis process and results.

IV. **ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

As mentioned above students were separated as poor, average, and good based on the success rate. Among the poor students, the average scores of the equivalent to (1.9). 35.5% of respondents said that their financial level is high and 64.5%normal (moderate). The approximate 12.8% of students doesn't organize their times well and14.5% of them don't but any reading plans. Nearly half of respondents (45%) confirm that they used handouts from the main reference

only and the majority (71%) selects some parts of course to be covered for the exam. Only 53.2% used questions and answers to facilitate reading. For family support 19.3% of students said that their parents don't follow their grades.

Less than half of respondents said their parents encourage them strongly to improve their level. Table 2 bellow show the percentage of each question.

Table2: Analysis results

	Questions	Percentage		
		yes	No	sometimes
General Studying habits	Do you organize your time?	58.9	12.8	28.2
	Do you have reading plan before exams?	48.5	14.5	37
	Do you use handouts from the main reference	77.4	19.3	3.2
	Do you highlight special parts during study	60.1	26	24
	Do you depend on sample questions and answers way in your study	53.2	16.2	30.6
	Do you repeat some parts periodically to overcome forgetting	62.9	11.3	25.8
Studying habits in class	Do you take notes in class?	74.2	11.3	14.5
	Attend group study session with classmate?	40.3	29	30.6
	Study in silence and alone most times?	77.4	6.5	16.1
	Did you read supporting materials in any language?	41.9	43.5	14.5
	Are you on time for class?	82.3	3.2	14.5
	Are you missing 3 lectures or less in semester?	27.4	48.4	24.2
	Do you use internet resources to improve performance	45.2	16.1	38.7
	Do you use internet application (Google apps.) in your study	59.7	25.8	14.5
Family support	Did your parents follow-up you grades	53.2	16.3	27.4
	Did your parents enforce you to study strongly	32.3	45.2	22.6

Figure 2 bellow shows the relationship between student habits related to class.
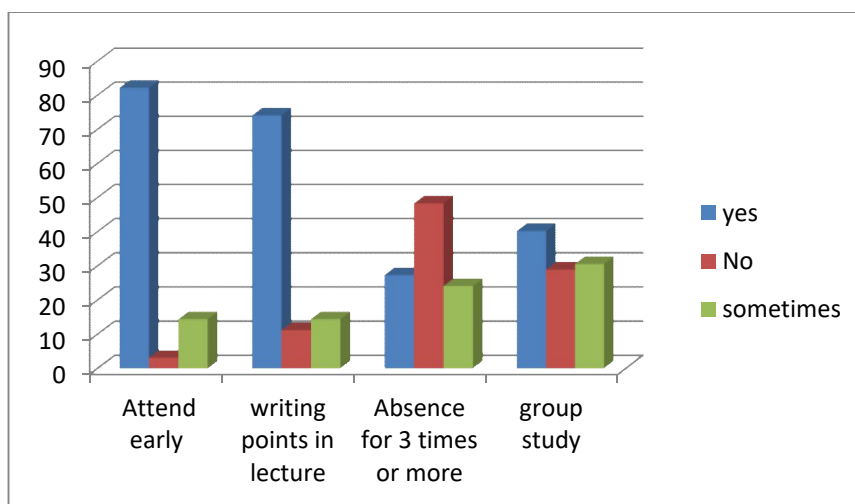
Fig.2: Relationship between student habits in class

Figure 3 below shows respondent's replays about using both internet resources and google applications to improve their performance.
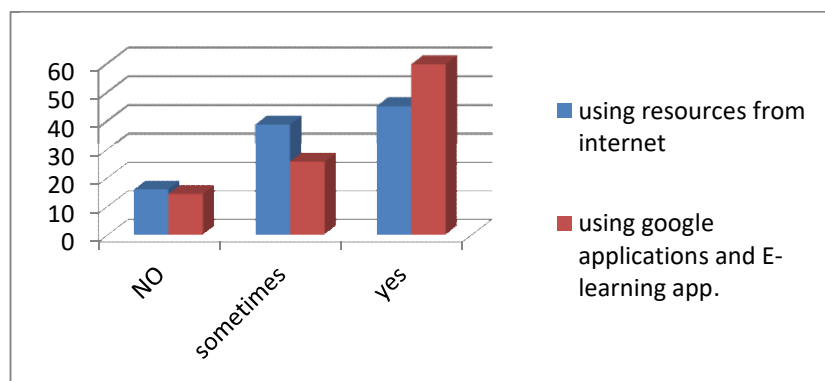

Fig.3: Using internet resources and google applications by students

Correlation was done to identify which of the above factors is the most related to success rate .so, students can care about it to improve their performance. Results confirm the existence of strong relation between parents education level and student success rate. Moreover, habits like repeating some parts periodically to overcome forgetting, Writing points in lecture during class time, less lectures absence during semester, using additional materials to support understanding, using internet as source of additional materials to support understanding and reading in silence had effect on student success rate. In context of family support, the effect of enforcing students to study and encourage them by parents has a great effect on their academic performance. Student financial level doesn't have a big impact on success rate. On the other hand, some habits has a bad impact on student performance on the final exam such as covering only selected parts from reference for exam and increasing the studying hours in exam period only. It is important to note that students in the final levels get better success rate than in the first level. Table 3 bellow shows correlation result.

Table3: correlation between reading habits and student success rate

	Student Successes Rate	
	P-value	R-value

Father education	0.012	0.286
Mother education	0.015	0.217
Financial situation	0.413	0.074
Hours spend per day	0.789	0.024
Hours spend during exams	0.425	- 0.072
Reading plan	0.202	0.115
Reading handouts from the main reference	0.677	0.038
Covering only selected parts for exam	0.004	-0.459
Use sample questions	0.710	0.034
Put summarized points to read	0.065	0.166
repeat some parts periodically to overcome Forgetting	0.01	0.29
Parents follow-up grades	0.174	0.123
parents enforce student to study strongly	0.009	0.233
Attend lecture at a time	0.145	0.132
Writing points in lecture	0.05	0.176
Absence less than three times	0.005	0.250
Attending group study	0.170	0.124
Read in silent	0.008	0.193
Additional material	0.044	0.125
Use internet resources	0.001	0.301
Using Google applications	0.474	0.065
Academic Level	0.004	0.257

It is known that changing habits and behaviours will affects person attitudes and then improving or decreasing the final performance. According to that, if student change his reading habits he/she can improve his / her performance. The following figure 4 shows the steps for improving performance through habits.
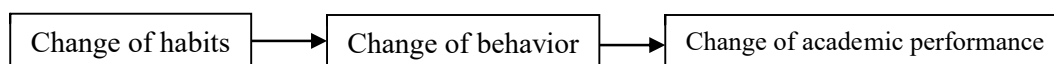
Change of habits → Change of behavior → Change of academic performance

Fig 4: steps for improving performance through habits

V. CONCLUSIONS

The paper represents an attempt to contribute to academic research. It addresses the main factors affecting student academic performance. The demographic information of students involved in our study showed the existence of factors may affect their performance such as parent's education level and student academic level. Although, such factors are out of control, it could be improved by further managing another factors related to student habits in reading such as increasing number of hours for reading during normal days before exam time and etc. It is important to note that family follow up by only asking about student grades and family financial level doesn't have a big impact on student performance. On another hand, enforcing students to study and encourage him by family could affect his/her performance well if it used in the right way.

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